

EVANGELICA

by

Apollo Belvedere

YUL



THE LIBRARY OF
YORK
UNIVERSITY

YUL



3 9007 0307 7804 7

Date Due

SC CIRC APR 20 1988

DIS APR 13 1988

EVANGELICA

“ So many great
Illustrious spirits have conversed with woe,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress, and make ambition
Even wish the frown beyond the smile of fortune.”

“ Hew the block off, and get out the man.”



“She became suddenly conscious of her mind being addressed by a voiceless voice.”

EVANGELICA

BY

APOLLO BELVEDERE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. D. WELDON



PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
UNIVERSITY PRESS: JOHN WILSON AND SON

1897

S
088
342
E9

Copyright, 1897,
BY KATHERINE RUSSELL.

All rights reserved.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EVANGELICA'S SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD .	11
II. A DEED OF LOVE	22
III. EVANGELICA INCITED TO GRAPPLE HER EVIL STAR	30
IV. A TROPHY OF LOVE	47
V. DINAH ENCOURAGED	62
VI. A GODDESS SELF-HEWN	87
VII. LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES	103
VIII. A CONVERSATIONAL CAPITALIST	115
IX. HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART	139

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
“She became suddenly conscious of her mind being addressed by a voiceless voice” . . . <i>Frontispiece</i>	
““I was so chuck-full of happiness—manufactured by that Yankee dude that was all in my mind””	83
““It would be just as well worth my while to have a frozen icicle for an audience as you”” . .	135
“There she stood in her flowing robes of white”.	145

EVANGELICA

CHAPTER I

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.”

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a New England town on a bright November morning of the year 1800, of poor but alas! improvident parents, the heroine of our tale was born, upon whom we will bestow the name of Evangelica. Few have been ushered into their earthly career under blacker circumstances, or with prospects of a darker or unhappier passage. That prophetic symbol of a child's sin and downfall—a motherless childhood—was hers at birth; her re-

EVANGELICA

maining parent was a father in name, and in that alone. No thought of the growth, training, or happiness of the soul spark within this little waif entered his unthinking mind ; ushered upon life was she even after the fashion of animals devoid of all soul germ. A victim of drunkenness, no higher zest was known him than that afforded by the indulgence of his lower propensities, and an enjoyment — which so often accompanies the too free use of intoxicants — found in abusing his helpless family. Two boys he already had who gave every promise of growing to be worthy sons of their ignoble sire. A further inmate was not long after added to the household in the person of a step-mother, much like the master, — drunkenness and unkindness included. Now for a pen picture of this — shall we call it home? Hatred, envy, and desire for

A SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD

strife — which naturally follow the too free use of intoxicants — were its watch-words ; social life prohibited, so that no tales of the cruelty inflicted upon the little Evangelica could reach the neighboring ears ; and oh ! the heartache of those long wintry evenings which knew no respite save that afforded by the reading of the evening paper. When not kept at home to do the drudgery her step-mother permitted her attending the neighboring school ; but alas ! sorrow followed her even there ; the raggedness of her garments, the timidity of her crushed spirit, excited the ridicule of the bolder and more fortunate scholars, which penetrated like a poisoned arrow into her sensitive soul, giving birth to hatred, malice, and feelings of revenge. Owing to her own appeals she was permitted the luxury of joining a sabbath class ; but

EVANGELICA

being unkempt in appearance, unattractive in manners, little else than tolerance was accorded by her religious trainers.

In this atmosphere grew up Evangelica; and that we may know how she thrived therein, let us in this her tenth year take a critical look into her character. Afflicted with a keen sensitiveness of nature, gifted with a sort of instinctive awe — love to her had not yet been born — for a Supreme Deity she scarce knew; accursed with a nature full of lying, deceit, and malice, but of their iniquities comparatively guiltless before God or man; for the abuse and ill treatment which had so lavishly been bestowed upon her, had been fertile to develop to its intensest growth all the germs of evil within her; while the fertilizing power of love and kindness to create in her creations of themselves and the virtues that

A SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD

wait upon them, had yet to be tested. Unfortunate was she that her training blossomed naught but perversity; but bloody guilt laid with the awakeners who had sacrilegiously blotted out the fair insignia of Heaven from the snow-white soul of that little child fresh from the hands of its Maker. Way down in that little elf were the germs of love and honor; but the thick undergrowth of evil propensities which had so faithfully been fostered had quite smothered them, and there they lay lifeless for the want of a spark to enkindle and fan them into being. Companionship which comes solely from heart to heart contact and communion of spirit she did not know; — books were her sole soul companions, and they furnished her with creatures who, owing to their unhappy sadness, softened her sorrows, and kept alive her

EVANGELICA

sympathies. Dickens' little Nell never awakened a more sympathetic heart chord than in this our little sufferer. Though all but school-books were forbidden fruit in this loveless habitation, the untruthfulness and duplicity with which she was teeming, enabled her to indulge in them quite freely under cover; chores done for the neighbors furnishing her with the funds necessary to purchase their supply. When either one or both of her brothers returned to the home in a state of intoxication, the mother's custom was to make it an occasion of taunting her, saying,—"that it was caused by the taint in the family blood which they were powerless to overcome, and time would force her also to follow in their footsteps,"—thus advocating the doctrine of heredity; a belief as popular with peasant as with king.

A SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD

Our fathers' vices are indeed within us, part and parcel of ourselves, adding to our woes, increasing our sorrows; but more hurtful than their bequeathed vices are the promulgators of the doctrine who advance no possibility of our subduing our ghostly occupants and forcing them vacate our individual tenements. Did they but enter with right good will into gloved combat with the ghostly vices of their sires, they would learn how cowardly they could be made to skulk off into the graves of their rightful slaves.

Both brothers died young, martyrs to the family appetite; their graves a holocaust to be laid at the altar of the vices of their sires. At the close of her thirteenth year we find her alone in the world; both parents were killed in a railroad accident on their way to a neighboring city, and their remains brought home

EVANGELICA

for burial. No sorrow was felt by Evangelica for their loss, but rather satisfaction that she could no longer be the recipient of their unkindness. What a volume can be read at the bier of him for whom no sigh is given, no tear shed ! It tells of a life aimless, purposeless, and ill spent ; and we accord to it its fitting accompaniment and lay them in tearless and regretless graves. Funds were found to give them a resting-place alongside the ashes of their dead, leaving Evangelica totally unprovided for.

On her return from giving their remains up to Mother Earth, with a heavy heart she sat herself down in that homeless home to weep. There she was, an inhabitant of a sphere with millions of people like herself, and yet walked the earth so completely alone, that were she taken hence her absence would scarce

A SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD

cause a ripple of inquiry. Tears came as she realized her helpless condition, and flowed more bitter yet as the taunt of neighbors and heartless mother — “that the curse of blood was upon her with its seal of a tainted life” — rang in her ear, and burned at her heart. Suddenly she became conscious of her mind being addressed by a master Intelligence, — not of earthly origin, — a voiceless voice giving answer to her biting thoughts, saying : — “No vice bequeathed you by your forefathers but its remedy lies within you; Will is potent master of the universe, all nature crumbles at his command; seek gospel of seer and sage, make him your own, incarnate his despotic power within yourself, and all is yours.” . . .

Then all was still; there was no entrance, no exit of spirits, no undignified table rappings; nothing but this direct

EVANGELICA

communication, distinct and legible, to her pondering mind. What occasioned this break in the ways of nature? Was it owing to the awe and reverence with which that favored mind looked upon the Great Omnipotent? Or, was it pity for that helpless, hungered child that tempted Providence to break open the skies, and encourage her *Itself* to put the armor on, and wage battle against the world? We know not. Certain it is, these words brought her peace and comfort, for they told her that *One* was watchful of her, and child though she was, fully did she make up her mind to hearken and obey *His* behest.

A few days following a Mrs. Van Chaldwick, — for whom she had frequently done chores, — hearing incidentally of her utterly forlorn condition, came and offered to provide for and give her

A SORROWFUL CHILDHOOD

a home ; this unexpected fortune was only too gladly accepted, for our unfortunate had looked forward to nothing better than going out to service. The few household effects were disposed of to the neighbors, and at an agreed time her benefactor, with the courtesy natural to a lady, came to personally conduct her to her new home. Regretless she left the scene of her bitter trials and sorrows, and with the same feeling do we drop the curtain upon that homeless home forever.

EVANGELICA

CHAPTER II

“ Only a thought in passing — a smile, or encouraging
word,
Has lifted many a burden no other gift could have
stirred.
Only ! — But then the onyls
Make up the mighty all.”

ON the outskirts of the same town was the home towards which our two friends were wending their way, and a pretty picture did it present to their approaching view, imparting in its very aspect a delightful “ Home, sweet Home ” feeling of which palaces are so barren. It was just small enough to be cosey, with velvet lawns on either side, and wide verandas trellised with wild rose and honeysuckle, whose delicious fragrance tempted the feathery songsters to hover near, and lend

A DEED OF LOVE

their notes of gladness to add joyfulness to the scene. Mrs. Van Chaldwick was a widow, quite alone in the world, and although once opulent, her wealth now consisted in owning her dwelling home, and possessing an income sufficiently large to keep it going in an unostentatious manner. The interior of her home at once suggested the refined and cultured taste of its occupant; daintiest of china lent its attractiveness to her daily repasts; service of silver added increase to its palatableness; a tapestry of value, a painting from a master hand were held — despite their fabulous value — to feast her eye, and administer to her love of the Beautiful. Personally she was the milk of human kindness, having for even erring man naught but feelings of sorrow at his weak yielding to wicked propensities, and thoroughly imbued with a conviction that a

EVANGELICA

good deed done to one of earth's unfortunates, was the holiest and noblest form of prayer. This spirit it was that prompted the introduction of the newcomer into her home; her attempting to dig and unearth the rank weeds of her former training; her attempting to replace them with fertile seed and soil, in the hope of blossoming from thence a creature of nobility and worth. Upon entering the home Mrs. Van Chaldwick extended her a kindly greeting, saying:—

“All hospitality, all kindness, is about to be shown you; in return you are expected to manfully trample your vicious inclinations underfoot; an especial guard are you asked to place over your great untruthfulness, for truth and love unalloyed are the chief characteristics of higher man, and once made a compo-

A DEED OF LOVE

ment part of ourselves all other virtues follow easily in their train.”

This kindness, so sweetly expressed, softened the harshness of that heart made stone by ill usage; tears welled up into Evangelica's eyes from that deeply-touched heart, and between heavy sobs she managed to frame a reply to the effect, — that she knew she was both uncouth and full of evil, that she was at a loss to understand how she had met favor in the eyes of one so lovely, and difficult though it was for her to do what was right, — as it had been defined her at the sabbath class, — still would she make a determined effort towards it, if thereby she could give pleasure to one so truly good and lovely; then recollecting her supernatural message she added, with all the naïveté of a childish child: — “I have been told if I *will* real, real hard I will

EVANGELICA

not have to follow in my folks' wicked footsteps, although some bad people have said that I could not help but do so."

This reply clearly told of a decided germ of good, and greatly encouraged her benefactor to use every nutriment towards its development. One means only did she intend using; for firmly did she believe that whatever was sowed reaped its counterpart, and that goodness could spring solely from acts of kindness, and appeals to the higher self. Force and the lash are necessary weapons toward subduing animal man, but once tamed beyond the brute, a sense of and desire to do right is the only loadstone to further development.

The remaining inmate of the home was Dinah, the maid of all work; a fat, generous-looking darky, with teeth so white

A DEED OF LOVE

that they fairly glistened, and eyes that danced with delight whenever occasion supplied them with an opportunity. Upon being presented to Evangelica, she exclaimed: "Laws! I'm so glad we're to have a child around, for we'll have sunshine in the house now the whole day long."

Evangelica's heart beat gladly at this kindly greeting, and firmly did she resolve to give her benefactor the return exacted, or die in the attempt. As Evangelica was not embarrassed by undesirable relations, — who would have been objectionable visitors, and neutralizers of the good instructions about to be given, — Mrs. Van Chaldwick decided that it would add to the attainment of the end in view to receive Evangelica on a footing of equality with herself, and so keep her as much as possible under personal super-

EVANGELICA

vision. She was perfectly fascinated with the weaving and solution of this problem : — here was a child of coercion, a wanderer in the by-paths of wicked propensities taken, — a sudden change made in the discipline employed ; kindness and developing a sense of right used as allies towards the attempted translation of this unhappy waif into a being of worth and noble purpose.

Herein lies the solution of the problem whether life is or is not worth living. Every man's answer to this question is an infallible index of his worth or worthlessness. A life without an aim is rudderless ; and lacking incentive, life is not worth living. A life of unhallowed pleasures exhilarates through the excitement they afford, but reaction and consequent depression invariably follow, which, together with being compelled to keep one's

A DEED OF LOVE

self under lock and key, and the inability of being able to look one's self squarely in the face, again makes life not worth living. But the man of noble purpose, having a pursuit which yields him zest and pleasure, possessed of the satisfaction that his life is not being lived in vain, able to personally interview himself unmasked, owns what constitutes the necromancy of life which verily makes it well worth living.

EVANGELICA

CHAPTER III

“Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not

Who would be free themselves must strike the blow ? ”

BYRON.

RIGHT royally did Evangelica set about dethroning her little nastinesses, as she herself called them ; but difficult was the task, and frequent relapses into native failings, and a dread that she was aiming at the impossible, threw heavy shadows on her hopes of attainment. One day, having been reprimanded at school for telling an untruth, she felt more than usually disheartened ; nothing can better depict her feelings than the words she afterwards used to Dinah : —

“ I feel so *awfully* unhappy, Dinah, that I ’ve got to open my mind inside out to some one or burst.”

GRAPPLING FATE

She felt Mrs. Van Chaldwick to be so immeasurably above her that she was always timid in her presence, so concluded to repair to the kitchen, feeling that to housemaid Dinah she could proceed with the process of unbosoming herself without embarrassment. Seating herself near the kitchen table, she opened her heart plaint, saying : —

“ I ’ve got a private secret to tell you, Dinah, but you must keep it to yourself, and promise never, never tell, for it would make me feel terribly ashamed of myself if it was known. Well, it is just this, — I ’m so tired twisting this tongue of mine around in a new direction and forcing it to tell the truth, that I ache all over ; every time I stop watching it, it trots off by itself from sheer force of habit, and fibs right and left and all over ; and I feel so awfully discouraged because

EVANGELICA

I can't make it mind, that I don't know what to do."

"Lor' bless you," answered Dinah, "that's oftentimes the case, you try so hard to do things right, and it appears as if the more try you put onto yourself, the harder they seem to grow; but just keep that try up long enough and they'll take a scare onto themselves, twist in the opposite direction, and never get heard from no more."

"But, Dinah," said Evangelica, "I read yesterday in a journal, that you were compelled to do certain things which you were especially prone to, whether you wanted to or not, because their force was stronger than you, and consequently could not be resisted."

"Nonsense, child," replied Dinah, "there's nothing the matter with them folks that talk book-talk like that, but

GRAPPLING FATE

that they've gone clean out of their wits on book-learning, and never studied up the science of common sense. Now just watch that lad over yonder; see, he wants to lift that bushel basket of peaches from the ground. How's he going about it? In a weak-kneed, hollow-chested fashion? No, not that sensible chap; instinct is what he hearkens to, so he takes in a big mastodonian breath, puffs himself clean out to the bursting point with a tremendous big 'I will,' picks up that bushel basket, and trots himself off with it in a jiffy. He knows instinct, that lad does, as it was put into him by nature, he's held onto it too; he's not like them book authorities you're telling about who've got a tremendous lot of learning, but not a grain at all of common sense. Don't catch him preaching he can't do things because

EVANGELICA

he ain't got force enough inside of himself to do them on, like that brainless philosopher you're telling about; no, not that common-sense lad; he knows 'I can not' is suicidal to effort and thus has the weakness of 'I will not,' so he goes and manufactures an extra supply of 'I will' force for the have to try hard to do it occasion, corks it up tight, puts it inside of himself, and steers clean through his dilemma, over bushes, brambles, briers, and every kind of hardship that stands in his way. Now, understand me, Honey, I don't mean to say that you can twist yourself into a big millionaire man by the wishing for it; what I'm trying to elucidate is that there's nothing this side of Jordan's banks that you ought to do but you can by the trying, and just how well you do it depends upon your abilities,

GRAPPLING FATE

and how much 'I will' steam you muster up for the occasion. For example, if I go to work and polish my range in a don't-care fashion, it comes out clean and that's about all ; but if I get at it with a vim and a vengeance, — golly ! no one within a square or two need own a looking-glass after that ! But then, it's a heap harder for some folks to do some certain things than others ; for instance, clap some folks on a bicycle and they'll walk themselves right off with it. I saw a lad do that once, jumped on one for the very first time in his life and sailed himself away like a champion ; thinks I to myself I can do that same thing too ; — but the darned wheel I got on did n't do any sailing ! Laws, no ! it behaved like it was mad ; spilt me out and danced itself on the right and left, and all over me ! If I had had time would n't I

EVANGELICA

have gloried in taming that big, clumsy, mechanical animal into keeping itself balanced beneath me, and not make a platform of my bones to try its fancy steps upon! I wouldn't have said I had n't the force to do it on; no, not I! I'd have gone and manufactured the force; but my incapacity in that particular direction would have compelled me to take five or six years to subdue the clumsy elephant, and I had n't that much time to spare. Well, I've gone and stretched that yarn a mile or two, — I reckon I'd best come down to a year and a half, so as to make it sound more plausible like . . .

“ Well, if I have n't gone and delivered a lecture that a disciple of Demosthenes might be proud of; — all the balance I've got left unsaid on the important subject is, if I can only get hold of a

GRAPPLING FATE

pair of ears — or even one will do — to practise my preaching capabilities on, they'll develop so volomos, — no, no, so voluminously — (did I get that high-stepper in right?) that Deacon Jones will have to step down from being Prima Donna at prayer-meeting; and I'll be the reigning belle at Ocean Grove camp-meeting this very next summer that's a-coming."

"But, Dinah, don't wander off so," pleaded Evangelica; "I want that you tell me true, and help me out of my trouble. This book says that even as the shape of our ears and noses come to us from our ancestors, just so do they bequeath us their failings; and it's about as useless for us to try to rid ourselves of them, as to attempt the shaping of our noses. Oh! It makes me feel terribly to think of Mrs. Van Chaldwick wasting kindness

EVANGELICA

and money in the hopes of my growing up something worthy, and I unable to do it. I am starving with the desire to please her, because she is the only one who ever thought me worthy a kindness; and I strain, and strain, and strain until I ache all over from the effort, and even then I can't prevent myself from behaving topsyturvy;—it does seem to me as if my grandfathers are too much for me.”

The recital of her woes was brought to a full stop by a downpour of tears and heavy sobs, which cut tender-hearted Dinah to the quick.

“There now, Honey, stop that right away or you'll set me off a-blubbering too; don't you see yourself that that book has n't got any brains in it? Why, from time immemorial that word Will has had a lawfully appointed place in the dictionary, and in the name of logic, what

GRAPPLING FATE

would it be doing there all this time if there was n't such a thing in existence? Well, now, the definition of that word Will is just this:—The power we've got in ourselves to do or not to do certain things, easier and harder for some folks to exercise than for others, according to their proneness for or against them identical things which they do, or do not wish to do. Them folks that talk that nonsense are fanatics; they hold on with a vengeance to their one tune,—we've got our grandfathers inside of us raising the devil generally,—but they never advocate the use of effort, or force, or any like implements,—all of which they'll find in Webster's abridged,—to get rid of them undesirable tenants, and knock them clean out the inside of ourselves. Why, if God did n't exert Himself, we'd have no sun, no moon, no stars; reason

EVANGELICA

tells us that they have no intelligence, and must be guided in their pathways by a Master hand to whose commands they unquestionably bow. Then why should n't we expect to use some *try* to effect our ends? — no, child, 'I will' is the all-powerful, all-effective, potential force that conquers grandfathers, grandmothers, and the devil himself to boot. Them quack philosophers cater very nicely to the taste of the lazy folks' brigade, and if they don't stop preaching their one-sided doctrine, the army of the good-for-nothings will swell to such alarming proportions, that the industrious other-sided community will come pretty close on towards being submerged. If them philosophers studied the definition of the word laziness they'd learn that it meant just this:— The inclination of inactive individuals not to do certain things

GRAPPLING FATE

because they don't wish to exert themselves sufficiently to muster up enough of energy to do them on. It's just want of energy alone that keeps their grandfathers' hobgoblins hanging onto the inside of them.

"Them learned but wisdom-lacking heads talked just that same about us poor colored folks when we were in chains. They contended that we were mere things and chattels, and legitimate objects of trade; full of cunning, trickery, and deceit; that our vices and low animal condition—which they claimed we were powerless to trample on—exacted our being retained in bondage and chains. Some good men who respected us, black as we were, on account of the immortal spark within us, furlled our banners, fought our battles, and obtained our freedom. The lash was the weapon used to

EVANGELICA

force our submitting to our body and soul masters! Have we deteriorated through its suppression, and appeals to our higher selves substituted in its stead? Have we repaid the efforts of those heroes who secured our emancipation from bondage and chains; who gained our entrance into fields of labor and self-respecting industry; who secured us the ownership of our bodies and immortal souls? Have we not developed into a self-supporting, industrious community? Do we in our day of freedom fill jails, workhouses, or penitentiaries, as predicted by them false prophets of old? Considering our advantages are we not, comparatively speaking, learned? Have we not triumphed over generations of illiterate ancestors who could neither read nor write? Look at the help of the old Baltimore families, — are they not better

GRAPPLING FATE

bred than a great many of your so-called ladies? Do you hear them raise their voices, employ other than choice language, or move but in ways of gentleness? Our emancipation found us steeped in the lowest form of ignorance, slaves of the sins natural to our animal condition, — like unto generation upon generations of ancestors who preceded us, — and downed lower yet by the sins our owners unwillingly forced upon us. Do we not, in our progress, prove that the old clothes of our ancestors can be removed? Is it not fair to presume that with a brain, the result of six or seven generations of culture, time will see us clearly demonstrate that their skeleton vices can be forced to unloosen from off us their unholy grasp? Some of us have trampled upon naught; but the progress of the many proves that to be owning not to strength of ghostly ances-

EVANGELICA

tors, but to lack of sufficient 'I will' force to snap asunder their ungodly chains. . . .

"You can depend upon the truth of every word I say to you, Honey; I know what I'm talking about every time, for I'm possessed of considerable learning even if I do happen to be a maid of all work. I read every spare moment I can get; I hear every preacher that comes within a couple of miles of me; I bottle every bit of knowledge I get hold of; and golly! ain't I happy when I own the floor at prayer-meeting and am giving the high-flown material away on the afflicted brethren!

"Well, I've used my talking capital clean up; have n't got the shoot of an idea left to go on with; but don't fret over the awful catastrophe, Honey, 't won't take this colored celebrity long to lay in a

GRAPPLING FATE

fresh supply of learning to buzz on with.

“Now cheer up, child, — don’t pay a particle of attention to that brainless philosophy, but put your shoulder to the wheel, turn it around good and strong, and I promise that you’ll turn out like the daughter of a big grandee! Whenever you feel the attempt too much for you, just say to yourself — I am nobody, I am determined to give myself birth into something good and noble; I will surmount every obstacle that stands in the way, even if it costs me blood.”

“I will indeed try, Dinah, and oh! I feel encouraged, because I know you would never be so cruel as to tell me I could make myself good, and leave me to find out, after repeated efforts, that it was impossible.”

Dinah certainly had an enthusiastic

EVANGELICA

opinion of her people, but on the whole her argument was logical, and her advice decidedly good. Instinct says that we were put here by a Superior Being for some set and definite purpose ; certain it is we come in handicapped with strong transmitted tendencies ; yet were we not possessed in ourselves of some power to do, or not to do, to mitigate or to conquer our propensities, what would we be but mere automatons, and about as much sense shown in our creation as in the making of a jumping jack, which moves only as it is pulled by a string.

A TROPHY OF LOVE

CHAPTER IV

“ The bravest trophy ever man obtained
Is that which o’er himself, himself hath gained.”

EARL OF STIRLING.

EARTH’s reflection of Heaven is found in a happy home, and this was the present environment of our now fortunate Evangelica. Upon entering the door of its hallowed shrine one imbibed from its very atmosphere quieting calm and peace, and intuitively felt that here all was gentleness and love ; — a veritable Elysium fit to be the dwelling-place of gods. This is the one characteristic of the perfect home : — Peace ; — Peace which has potency enough in itself to make Heaven out of Hell. Its hallowed portals were barred and fastened against

EVANGELICA

the intrusion of the bitter turmoils of life ; a circle of hearts were within its shrine which were nourished by love and kindness, and so serving one the other was light, — even a labor of love.

Mrs. Van Chaldwick was an exceptional woman, whose word had yet to be questioned or honor tarnished ; she influenced one by her presence precisely as did her home, imparting a soothing feeling of peace, and allaying all unrest and excitement. A happy — or rather sacred — home it was, for it breathed but godliness and peace, and a wonderful incentive did it furnish Evangelica to march manfully upward and onward ; while the virtues and perfections of its mistress yielded an all-powerful spur to force the uprising of nature within her to her mother's towering standard.

Seven years had elapsed since Evan-

A TROPHY OF LOVE

gelica had become an inmate of its sanctuary, and during that time her sole watchword had been to rise to the height of its mistress. With knitted brows,—as was her habit when any difficulty needed solving,—she presented herself upon a particular occasion to Mrs. Van Chaldwick.

“Dear mother,” said she, “I have a conundrum I wish solved, and you are the only one who can do it.”

“Then most willingly will it be done,” was the gentle rejoinder.

“Well, it’s just this :—while the rule is that people are praised for their graciousness, or admired for their beauty or talents, the one expression every one uses with regard to you is, that they love you ; and I have come to the conclusion that you must possess some secret, some potent charm that commands it from all,

EVANGELICA

and I want you to share it with me, so that I, too, can own a warm spot in everybody's heart."

"My child, there is a secret and but one:—if you want love give love, if you want a friend be a friend; all my life I have lived up to the maxim that 'love begets love,' and although I have had instances of biting ingratitude which have cut sharper than a serpent's tooth; still were they the exceptions which proved the rule true, that love shown engenders and commands its like in the recipient. If you wish to be loved through life make this maxim — 'Love begets love' — yours, and it will act like an open sesame to all hearts, making them beat in warm accord to your own.

"I now wish to open my mind to you concerning yourself; you have attained

A TROPHY OF LOVE

your twentieth year ; when I took you, you were black with, — well, let us say undesirable tendencies ; while I was sceptical as to the success of your attempted redemption, still did I feel a sort of fascination in the solving of the problem as to what love and kindness would do towards weaving your upbuilding. I knew you to be possessed of a sensitive soul upon which love would make a deep imprint, yet was I doubtful of success, for you were but a weakling easily crushed by defeat, and I was aware that your success demanded a giant endeavor. A scowl of habitual discontent was yours ; sullenness, ill breeding, and utter untruthfulness rendered you positively repellant, and in those first days I oftentimes gave a shudder at our mutual contact ; to-day this same contact ministers but pleasure, and yields that rest and peace secured

EVANGELICA

to open-heart communicants. You are now a beautiful woman ; a living example of that mystery of our Being, Soul passing out into body, and the masterliness of its skill, as it ‘cuts and chisels and carves, all being but as clay in its deft fingers as it forces the out-picturing of what lies within.’ The beauty now radiating from your countenance, brought about by the higher intellectual life, and the changed manners of your soul, forcibly bears witness to the truth of Spenser’s words : —

‘ So every spirit as it is more pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer body doth procure,
To habit in, and it more fairly dight,
With cheerful grace and amiable sight.
For, of the soul, the body form doth take ;
For soul is form and doth the body make.’

“ The change made by the loftiness of

A TROPHY OF LOVE

your new nature gliding into the expression of your countenance, and there leaving visible imprints of itself, of the exchange of a meaningless grin for a smile, whose sweetness speaks its outflow from a warm and loving heart, again illustrates that mystery of our nature the passage of Being into appearance. You have attained the summit of being :—a creature of unblemished truth ; not only of speech, but of thought and feeling. Here again is exemplified another mystery of our nature :—expression is at the untaught command of the little child, whose face, gesture, and sunny smile faithfully portrays the tale he wishes known ; when deceit and double dealing gain admittance, its services are his no more. The man of truth alone possesses the key which secures the ownership of its charm, for his feelings, flowing from a

EVANGELICA

lucid heart, unchecked by neither bar nor blemish in their passage, pass unhindered, and faithfully photograph themselves in face, in tone, and gesture. So you see that the acquisition of truth has secured you at one grasp the summit, the perfection of being, and what waits upon and accompanies it: — an expressive form and countenance. It remains with me to thank you for those giant endeavors which have won the victory achieved; to say that you have superseded my greatest expectations, and that my efforts are amply rewarded by the sweet of your companionship. At your door I can lay the master act of charity of my life, taking as I did your young soul wandering in the byways of crookedness; turning the beacon lights of love and sense of duty upon it; steering it effectually into the narrow pathway that

A TROPHY OF LOVE

satiates, and securing myself thereby a tangible reward in my home beyond the grave; that you may fully realize how satisfied I am with your successful efforts, learn that it is my intention to make you my lawfully adopted child and heir."

"Mother dear, do not, I pray you, speak to me of heirship, possessions, or any such things; bereft of your sunny, hospitable heart throbbing in unison with my joys and sorrows, this world would be but a barren wilderness, and life a heavy up-hill journey. Your words of praise buoy my heart with great gladness; and that you may know the potency of your magic weapon, 'Love begets love,' let me relate to you how it gave birth to Will, the Omnipotent within me, and transformed the weakling into a woman of giant endeavor.

"When you took me into your home,

EVANGELICA

the love and warmth you showed me thawed the hardness of that heart made stone by rough usage ; lit a germ of love within it, and fired me with zeal to give to you, the first who had ever shown me love, the trophy demanded for your efforts : — my conquered person. Bitter was the contest between me and myself, and times innumerable was the wrong one victor. My tongue was the strongest opponent in the contest, and when not watched, incessantly trotted off by itself and lied right and left, as if struggling to remain master of the situation ; and oft-times it seemed to me as if Hercules alone could subdue that piece of flesh two inches long ! Many times, when reprimanded for its misdemeanors, has sorrow been so truly mine that I could feel my heart ache and bleed within me, not at the strain of the unequal contest, but at the dread that

A TROPHY OF LOVE

it could ne'er be mine to present to you myself conquered, as a trophy for your loving efforts. In such moments would the words of that master Intelligence visit me : — ' Will is master of the universe ; — marshal his forces into your designs, for all crumbles at his commands.' So Will was the weapon I had to brandish ; train it into myself until it became one with me ; train until it developed into a living force ; grew into a familiar or genii, whose impulse would guide and steer me a victor into port. Train it into myself I did mentally, morally, and physically. Physically its force was brought into my being through that Breath of Life whose power is as potent to-day as when God breathed into the dust of the earth, and it became a living man. Within it lives all the tonic needed by man ; and strength and tone sufficient for his daily needs can best be

EVANGELICA

drawn from its living fountain of life. For, if we but breathe as if draining from it courage into ourselves, unconsciously does the head set itself erect; instinctively does the chest rise, expand, and assume the seat of honor; and courage, imbibed from its living force, asserts for itself a place, and grows still stronger by repeated drainings. We are not able to think high thoughts with our chest in, for the breath is the fly-wheel that regulates our nerve currents and thought; but, once let our breathing become rhythmical, and our entire system is harmonized; calmness comes to us, and with calm thought the face changes, and harsh lines disappear. Will is for him who is strong;—a long, rhythmical breath generates vital energy, and endurance means the amount of oxygen the lungs are able to take in. So, even as the Mussulman daily craves

A TROPHY OF LOVE

strength from Mahomet, did I daily drain from the Breath of Life nutriment essential for the spiritual affray. But, to proceed, from the Book of Books I gleaned penance and mortification to be powerful body sub-jectors ; so they, too, were called into service. Like unto the monks of old did the knotted discipline rain upon this rebellious flesh until it submitted to its rightful master. The merits and demerits of mortification have been a subject of much question ; the good results that accrued therefrom I lay not to the bodily pain inflicted, but to the tense will effort engendered, as I ground my teeth and lashed in with every blow determination to conquer. I leave you to judge of the efficacy of your gentle weapon when I tell you that blows were unfelt, when used as stepping-stones towards the attainment of your mapped-out goal.

EVANGELICA

“ Each step of progress has been heavy up-hill work ; watered by tears, coerced by the lash ; I do but mention them that you may know the miracle-working power of your gentle weapon, which, at its bidding, summoned up strength sufficient in me to accomplish the change you desired to effect.” . . .

Mrs. Van Chaldwick was visibly overcome by this recital, and very feelingly made answer : — “ Little did I think, my child, when I took you into my home, that back of that rough, uncouth girl was a jewel of such intrinsic worth, that she needed but cutting and polishing to develop into identical kinship of nature with myself, and that in time she would become child of mine in all save blood.”

This is the highest boon earth can confer upon her children, — the comradeship of two souls of such like identity that

A TROPHY OF LOVE

Nature has made them kin, and thus knit their hearts with a tie impossible to sever. This was the earthly fruition secured to Mrs. Van Chaldwick by her prayerful deed of love.

EVANGELICA

CHAPTER V

“Be noble ! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.”

LOWELL.

EVANGELICA, buoyed with joy by the satisfaction of her mother, felt it incumbent upon her to personally thank Dinah, whose words of cheer and kind endeavors had been so instrumental in effecting the great desideratum. After relating the joy her mother had expressed at her conquest, right childishly she added :—

“I want you to partake of my happiness, Dinah, and to feel that much of my success is owing to you ; your words have spurred me on over many a dangerous chasm into which without assistance

DINAH ENCOURAGED

I would have fallen completely overmastered ; the maxim you taught me, and cautioned me to follow, — ‘ Never to give up the ship, for if we but will we can, and can with a vengeance, if we do but battle for the will,’ — has been the keynote which has wrested for me success. My heart is full of gratitude to you, Dinah ; and I want you to know your efforts are not unthanked, so that when another of Earth’s unfortunates crosses your pathway, you will be encouraged to give her words of cheer ; to train her into resolute trim ; to arm her to the teeth to fight for Will, and do battle for victory. I have no intention of stopping the good work here ; onward will I go, and earn for myself a birthright of honor amongst the kingly sons of men. Advocating the evangel which has made me, will I make my life task ; vigorously will I teach

EVANGELICA

weakness to be sin; loudly will I proclaim the training in of Will to be the greater part of the saving religion of man. So well have you helped me over childish difficulties, that I have come to you with this new problem, and want you to confer with me as to the best method of propagating my evangel."

"My dear child," answered Dinah, "it is to your own pluck and untiring efforts alone that your success is due; and I am sure the same sequel awaits you in your new field. It seems like a farce for you to come to me now for counsel, for you have outgrown me on all sides, and it makes me feel mighty bad to think I can no longer assist you. But I'll cheer up and talk away, that's what will make me lose track of my sorrows; so I'll talk away at that hobby of yours as if I was Julius Cæsar and knew all about it.

DINAH ENCOURAGED

“ Well, you read me a lecture once on the subject of air ; I ’ll now proceed to recite you one on the same topic ; but before I commence I warn you not to pay overmuch heed to anything I say ; for I ’ll throw in all the comedy I ’ll catch hold of, together with anything sensible that happens along the way.

“ Well, to make a beginning, I ’ll start out by saying that for capital stock in your new enterprise, you can’t have anything better than oceans full of that grand breath of life, which will equip your weaklings with force and vigor. This ether, which binds the planets together with an iron hand, I claim to be as terrific a tonic — if we get it inside of ourselves good and strong — as strychnia, arsenic, or any of them chemicals that take the liberty of putting an end to us if we behave more intimately with them than their

EVANGELICA

dose allows. Some folks use brass as a commodity to push their way through life; this sort of tool does fairly good work at first; but after a while folks kind of get tired of it, and demonstrate the fact by bestowing a Balaam's ass kick upon the brassy individual. Don't look so shocked, my dear, that's not bad language; it's nothing but the name of an animal, and a mighty distinguished one at that, for he's made honorable mention of in the family Bible. Besides, what I'm trying to get at is, that a good supply of ozone daily pumped into the breathing apparatus will do the work a great deal safer, and puff you out with a just as happy as a big sunflower sort of a feeling, which will take and skate you merrily along over tempestuous seas and billowy waves, that ain't got any better manners than to get themselves into your way.

DINAH ENCOURAGED

You read me a lecture once to the effect that all the tonic man needs lives in the air, which lies above, below, and all around us; and bade me watch the chest instinctively swell out with strength, while mentally imbibing courage from its living fountain; well, I've tried that over and over again, and with such success that whenever I run short of nerve, I just make a dash for that atmosphere, and lay in courage stock enough to make this chicken come out champion cake-walker in any kind of an enterprise she gets into her woolly head to undertake."

"Why, Dinah, don't go on so nonsensically!"

"Hush, Honey, not a word out of you until I get through; it's not good manners for you to commence before I get finished; besides, you requested me for a prescription to make a circulating library

EVANGELICA

of that hobby of yours, and I have n't given it to you yet.

“Well, here it is:—Take them lungs of yours, stretch them out to double their size, lay in a terrific dose of atmosphere, and you'll get so giant strong that that enterprise will take a scare onto itself, and push right through without you having to say it boo.”

“Now, Dinah, I am going to get a word in edgeways; you are reading me a comedy lecture, but were you acquainted with your subject you would realize that you are not exaggerating its merits quite so much as you suppose. The time is here when progress will take the form of wresting the knowledge of the occult powers now sleeping in man, controlling them, and governing them by known laws; that day will its power as a conducting medium linking mind to mind be

DINAH ENCOURAGED

brought more fully to light, and that day, too, will see its intrinsic virtues no longer contested; it is its simplicity that now denies it a hearing. Did poor alcoholic-longing unfortunates know the exhilarating cordial it contained, the Keeley Cure would perish through lack of a patient; no danger of my family failing attacking me, for I look with aversion upon all alcoholic stimulants; a far more potent tonic do I know from which I suffer no reaction."

"Now don't take on so," chimed in Dinah. "I don't want you to think I don't believe in your remedy; I only exaggerated its meritorious qualifications a couple of degrees beyond the veracity point, so as to emphasize its virtues, and emphatically bring out its qualities of redemption.

"Let me let you inside of a joke that

EVANGELICA

happened to me:—you once read me a lecture, and to give you an idea what it was about, I'll redeliver you an extract from it:—‘Plenty of ether and oceans full of happiness are twins; they travel hand in hand; they hold the secret of evolution, for they prompt to higher existence, to warmer sympathies, to more perfect development, etc., etc., etc.’ Well, thinks I to myself, she's a-blowing it hard on that hobby of hers; but it sounds fine, mighty intellectual-like; just as if it came from a cranium that had been elevated to the highest mental aristocracy on a brainy, baked-bean diet; when she goes out I'll make a note of the whole performance, learn it by heart, and deed it away on the first pair of listening ears that I'll catch hold of. It took every one of my spare moments for two days — and nights too — before I

DINAH ENCOURAGED

could deliver that lecture unaccompanied by notes :—then I bethought me of a scheme of making that lecture serve the means of getting myself promoted into the state of connubial blessedness. On Deacon Jones would I surrender the whole performance ; if I could only succeed in impressing that gentleman with my vast learning, and mighty high-toned importance, why, the matrimonial halter might get slipped around my throat by the finest and handsomest widower in town. As I was aching body and soul and all over to get knotted therein good and tight, the grass did n't get much of a chance to grow under my feet before I presented myself at the residence of the illustrious gentleman aforesaid mentioned. Quite a company happened to be gathered together with the intention of passing a social evening, and very high-toned

EVANGELICA

folks they were, — I took them all in on one eyesight ; thinks I to myself, what a gorgeous impression I'll make on them when I'll sky-rocket off that lecture of mine on them ; why, I'll have them a-bowing and a-scraping to me like as if I was a Nabob of science ! I'll just wager that that love-manufacturing lad Cupid is a-chuckling his sides with glee at the opportunity I'm giving him of shooting off all the way from two to six of his arrows chuck-full of the tender passion on this very select audience of color. When a break occurred in the conversation, I proposed that the evening be not given up entirely to frivolous amusement, but that a part be set aside — after the manner of literary circles — to discuss the questions of the day. Without giving them a chance to say me nay, I rattled right on : — I, for one, was quite anxious

DINAH ENCOURAGED

to give them a few points on the subject of the ether; this fluid, I continued, — spreading my eye-glasses upon my nose with great pomposity, — consists of two gases, oxygen and nitrogen, and yet another, argon, discovered but a short time previous; it is moreover charged with electricity, magnetism, and celestial ether. Well, I kept it a-going in that high-fluten tone, and all went as merry as a wedding bell that was n't out of tune, until I struck this unfortunate sentence: 'Oh! poor blind mortals that won't see, that won't learn the virtues of this magnanimous ether, which is only too eager to take the weakling and transform him into a giant.' Well, sir, when I struck it there, up jumped Deacon Jones madder than a hornet; says he: 'Look at here, Sister Dinah, you ought to be ashamed to let such trash out of

EVANGELICA

yourself before this high-toned assembly ; you've a-steamed it on us for a good half-hour just like a lightning-express locomotive running against time, and we don't propose to swallow another overdose of any such non-literature. Why, I can tell, from the very way you've been delivering it, that you've read it in some book, learned it upside down, and given it away all crooked to this persecuted assembly. You're enamoured with the tune of your voice, but there's no one here anxious to get transferred into the cold, cold clay through a death certificate reading that we got talked there ; oh, no ! we aim to arrive through a higher-toned recipe than that ! Now I want you to understand that this ether, which you've been addressing as if it was a mother-in-law of the apple-pie order, is nothing but a don't know anything about it fluid,

DINAH ENCOURAGED

given by the great M.D.'s when they want to saw off legs, and sew up bodies, all unbeknown to the individuals that they belong to !'

"Well, sir, I opened my mouth to say that *I* was talking about the atmosphere, but, greatly excited, Deacon Jones called out:—'No, no, Sister Dinah, not another particle of verbal nonsense are we going to allow come out of you; change your tune and we'll let you have all the say you want; no one knows better than you how to lead hilarity and mirth; start that ball a-rolling; it's your legitimate duty to recuperate us after the funeral you've treated us to!'

"'Yes, yes,' answered another gentleman of mahogany hue, 'she'd be the greatest coon out if she'd only stick to her last; give us a song to help us cheer up on, Dinah, we're as blue as a parson

EVANGELICA

that performed a marriage ceremony and got left on the fee ; give us : —

There 's a good time a-coming, boys,
A good time coming ;
We may not live to see the day,
But there 's a good time coming.

Give it with a vim and a vengeance ;— that 's what will knock the life into us again, without having to imbibe a whiskey straight, or a Manhattan cocktail to do the business.' . . .

“ Well, sir, I could n't find myself nowhere ; I came just as near to the fainting episode, without doing it, as any one you ever heard tell of in your lifetime. Alack ! woe was me ! vanished into invisible atmosphere were my visions of double blessedness ; etherealized into nothingness were those matrimonial overtures which were to accrue from this rhetorical masterpiece. Down did my

DINAH ENCOURAGED

saddened heart tumble — through weight of its own sorrow — into the sole of my leathern boot ; paralyzed into unutterable silence — through sadness of spirit — was that tongue which had never failed in its life to perform its functions with most joyful alacrity. Sing for them indeed ! Had n't I warbled myself into a shadow without materializing a suitor ? Had n't I moved on to another camping-ground through losing faith in its matrimonial-awakening proclivities ? . . . Had I stuck to my text and rendered the lecture as it had been given to me, I reckon I'd have come out pretty close onto right ; but nothing would do this Cicero but she must finish off with a peroration of her own manufacture, calling upon humanity in general to permit the dynamic ether to take them up into its arms, and embrace the life into them like the Romeo of a

EVANGELICA

mother-in-law! My private opinion is that I went through the performance like a thoroughbred; but you couldn't get that through the woolly heads of *that* mahogany crowd; so, what was the use of my arguing it out with them? No use at all! Time would have got used up getting wasted! . . . I am going to make an interruption in my story to say right here, that I have sworn off perorations for lifetime, and from henceforth, and forever afterwards, my ambition will always be to keep well inside the track of trying to make a Demosthenes out of myself;—or an Edmund Burke either! You can just wager that I didn't let my disappointed hopes get shown to that ebony crowd; oh, no! I was cute enough for that,—even if I was bordering onto the insensible! When I recovered sufficient possession of myself to be able to

DINAH ENCOURAGED

articulate, I made them answer :— ‘ Why, of course I’d sing for them ; their pleasure was the only thing I had been thinking about, and I was only too glad to administer it in any form that they desired to take it.’ . . . A mighty stiff upper lip I kept onto myself until I got where there were n’t any witnesses around ;—it was in the privacy of my own apartment that them matrimonial air-castles, which never reached fructification, cast their gloomy spectres upon me, causing such a downpour of lachrymosal fluid that never was disappointed hope mourned by a more abundant April shower. Indigo blue was green compared to me the whole of the next day ; had n’t heart enough left to do anything on ; the Sally Lunn’s at breakfast were a heap harder to crack than a poker ; nothing would work straight ; I could n’t make that range assume a first

EVANGELICA

magnitude polish nohow I tried; them tin pans absolutely refused to burnish up to the star of the morning altitude, and as for the Angel's food cake, why, no one would indulge in it but them gentlemanly esquires of the pen—the pigs. Then it was that a bright scheme visited me; thinks I to myself, why, here I am way down in the dumps,—struck bottom;—now's the time to experiment on the air logic of that wisdom child. Let's see what's that bombast she gave way on me? Let me get it straight now; well here it comes verbatim:—‘When in a despondent frame of mind, the best possible antidote is to religiously force oneself to breathe long deep draughts of air; the effect will be hastened by holding at the same time a mental image of happiness; for there is a sympathy between our breathing, thinking, and feeling; deep

DINAH ENCOURAGED

breathing accompanies the happier emotions ; short breathing waits upon the unhappier.' Well, sure enough, there I was taking in nothing but little short whiffs of air, so I made a bee line for that oxygenated, nitrogeneous, argonated fluid, puffed myself clean out to the exploding point with it, and took on a mental image of being the merriest swell, and the happiest dude in the whole town. Well, sir, before night came — I arrived ; — a complete photograph of the entire mental image ; so chuck-full of happiness — manufactured by that Yankee dude that was all in my mind — that I had to let off a dozen or so of great ha, ha's at nothing at all, only just as a sort of safety valve to avoid a possible explosion of my corporeal atoms. Then did I deliver the following extemporaneous monologue upon myself : — That wisdom child is right ; if I can't

EVANGELICA

evolute that range, them tin pans, the washing or ironing, or anything else one degree above the dead fizzle line, when I'm afflicted with melancholia of the emotions, how in the name of thunder and lightning can I or any other body do any work on evolving ourselves skywards while suffering from the despondent predicament? Can't be done nohow you try; not even if Julius Cæsar says so! Happiness — that's the commodity that enables us to trip with light fantastic toe over misfortune and sorrows, and prevents them rascals from taking hold of us by the petticoats and evolving us backwards. . . .

“ Well, for the first time in my life I've succeeded in letting off all the vocabulary I had to spare; I'm so glad Deacon Jones was n't around to put a stop to me before I got finished; — I de-



“‘I was so chuck-full of happiness — manufactured by that Yankee dude that was all in my mind.’ ”

DINAH ENCOURAGED

clare, but I held the contents of an unabridged volume before I began ; — why, I feel a ton lighter since it left me.”

“ Well, Dinah, I am glad you have succeeded in talking yourself out to your heart’s content ; and glad, too, that you made your sorrows an object lesson to test your newly acquired knowledge ; the rule is, man listens and reads, not with eyes and ears, but with his prejudices ; and adjudges new facts heresies without granting them a hearing.”

So spoke Evangelica, and she was not far from right. What little thought — free from bias — would suffice to kill the doctrine of our being slaves of skeletons, and of our utter powerlessness of choosing between doing and not doing ! From the workmanship of the world are we given the lesson that like heroes — and “ not like dumb and driven cattle ” —

EVANGELICA

should we pass through life. Look at the myriads of stars how they press on without deviating from their mapped-out course ; — look at the sea which, since it was begot, has ebbed and flowed obedient to known mandates ; — look at the minerals — the plants — with their fixed rules from which they never vary ; but man — whose pathway was defined on tables of stone — who was furnished by the gentle Christ with a lamp that would guide his footsteps aright to the Eternal City ; man — “ an atom midst immensity ” — alone unheeds the Pilot ; — alone rejects His decrees. When from the rest of God’s creations he learns the lesson of conforming his life after the pattern of God’s plans, then will his majority be attained, then will his life be as a sunny day, and then will he walk this Eden-transformed earth — a god.

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

CHAPTER VI

“But nature, with a matchless hand, sends forth her
nobly born,
And laughs the paltry attributes of wealth and rank to
scorn ;
She moulds with care a spirit rare, half human, half
divine,
And cries exulting, ‘ Who can make a gentleman like
mine ? ’ ”

ELIZA COOK.

EVANGELICA had now attained her eight and twentieth year, and veritably was she full of grace and beauty ; “ she of a God seemed born, and not of mortal man,” in so little did she betray the earth earthy. As a child she had been an outcast where-soever she went ; now she was but as a magnet attracting all to her side. So distinctly were her traits a reproduction of

EVANGELICA

her mother's, so complete was the soul transfusion from one into the other, that people, not aware of their adopted relations, often congratulated her upon having, through inheritance, become the possessor of such beauty of character and nobility of purpose. Blood had had no voice in their resemblance or heart's unison; far holier was the tie: — kinship of Nature — which knit David unto Jonathan — bound them in unseverable union. In its highest form love is indestructible, but Cupid sends off many bastard shafts, which are but as “tents of a night.” Evangelica was a woman self-made; not in the sense of having accumulated hoards of gold, but of having greedily acquired knowledge, virtue, and worth. She was a creature of that type so often misunderstood, who can be coaxed by a silken thread, while a lash is

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

powerless to move them. No discipline but love had been employed in her latter-day school of training, but such a responsive chord did it strike in her sensitive soul, that Will the Omnipotent awoke therefrom, and with its aid she forged a thunderbolt and hurled it with such gigantic fury at the skeleton vices of her sires, that cowardly they had skulked off into the graves of their rightful slaves. It was not inherited traits but the characteristics of her mother that were now hers; daily had they been under her supervision; daily had it been her one absorbing longing to force an uprise of nature within her to her mother's towering standard; and now were the reproductions of her virtues to be seen in herself. The same Mother of Israel feeling, the same nobility of purpose, the same godlike love for frail, erring

EVANGELICA

human clay. Neither could a trace of inheritance be found in her face, manner, or bearing; there, too, had she been born anew. Intellectual life had chiselled her brow to a most exquisite delicacy; the love which pervaded every atom of her being—which she had bought for herself even at the expense of the lash—clothed her countenance with the beauty of its character; her open brow was the telltale of an honest heart; her feelings, flowing from an upright source, encountering no shadow of untruthfulness in their passage, beautifully interpreted themselves in eyes, in face, and gesture. The love with which she had imbued her nature had melted all grossness, softened all brusqueness, gifted her with exquisite gentleness of nature, which in turn bequeathed her Woman's supremest charm:—grace of movement; for gentleness of

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

motion is but the outer expression of the delicate manners of the soul. These were not inherited — no ; they were the handiwork of her hand ; for the body had been forced to mould itself anew to symmetrically fit the emancipated soul ; — it has been claimed by the ancients “ that beauty is the flowering of virtue,” and verily did she prove it true.

She was a worshipper of the Beautiful ; her belief was that as throughout Nature the Beautiful reigns without a discordant voice, man was thwarting the designs of the Master Artist did he not strive after a love of the Beautiful, and breathe in joy and gladness from the grandeur of His works. Her especial craving was to live constantly in the presence of the Beautiful ; flowers, tapestries, and dainty china were a feast to her eyes ; while the Master Marbles were her especial admiration.

EVANGELICA

Miniatures of the master gods and goddesses were in her room under constant supervision, and the exquisite chiselling of her own countenance seemed to bear out the theory that one first absorbs, and then grows to resemble, what the eye feasts upon. The Beautiful was consulted even in the adorning of her person, as if it was an ideal worshipped exclusively for itself, and this effectually purged her of every feeling of vanity; harmonies of style and color only were chosen; the lines of her figure religiously adhered to, and not misshappen and thrust out of place; while her wealth of golden hair was so arranged as to exhibit a head of such exquisite proportions that well could it vie with Diana's own.

It may truthfully be surmised from all of this that by lovers innumerable she had been besought, but to their pleadings she

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

invariably answered nay ; her mother realizing, through sad experiences, the thorny road of a woman devoid of a protecting arm, often seconded the addresses of a suitor with entreaties of her own ; — but to no avail. Upon one occasion being more than forcibly entreated, she coaxingly begged her mother to desist, and importune her no more, for, said she : —

“ It can never be ; — when I was a houseless child of want, and you came and lavished your wealth of love upon me, — a spark of which I had never known before, — the light of your pitying eyes shone so deep in my soul that a love was awakened which I have ever since guarded with the jealousy of a vestal’s care ; and never will I let it become dimmed for a being less exalted or lovely. At the portals of our home Truth and Honor have stood sentinels, never permitting a stain

EVANGELICA

against their honor to gain admittance ; honesty of speech, honesty of purpose, have been ours unsullied ; when these would-be suitors appear, and their little prevarications and deceits with them, that honesty, which has been too exquisitely fostered to bear rude contact with the world, is wounded, and their sullied hearts jar my own, which holds for its idol a votary of Honor's highest type. No, mother dear, I will live for you, and my mission I will wed alone ; loudly will I proclaim what Will has made of me ; loudly will I teach weakness to be sin of sins — because it mothers vice ; loudly will I prove man to be his own creator and star ! So urge me no more, now that you know how I feel, and that but sacrilege could I make of God's holy rite."

This view far from suited Mrs. Van

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

Chaldwick. Like a genuine mother she insisted upon Evangelica divesting herself of such heavy thoughts; adopting lighter views, and courting mirth and pleasure; feeling that thus a love would be enabled to come into her life which would brilliantly burnish it, and not usurp the heart-spot that belonged to her; — but urging was of no avail.

Evangelica was to taste the bitterness brought into the life of the principled woman of beauty through her fatal gift, by those covetous suitors who, to own the beauty they do not themselves possess, prize as valueless their honor, and make use of lamentations, preying, abuse, or anything to accomplish their one-sided end; for, even as the foul bird — without a question of its demerits — is equally with the fair most attracted to that beacon of the night which outshines the rest, so

EVANGELICA

do the pauper owners of Nature's favors make the princely possessors of her gifts the targets of their covetous longings, hideous jealousies, and disappointed hates ; — and in this respect how equally unprincipled are both man and woman.

Evangelica was possessed of that beauty, charm, and grace which unfortunately for her served as magnets to attract the unattractive ; who dishonestly did not see that they had no more right to covet the owner of charms so transcendent to their own, than they had to covet the firmament, or the glories of the western sky.

In her incessant thirst for knowledge Evangelica had attended a course of lectures on Psychology at a neighboring college. The Preceptor in charge was in his sixtieth year ; that tender age when man can no longer endure being crossed in love's ecstatic vision. He was small in

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

stature, inharmoniously proportioned to the verge of deformity, and save his mind — which was of the book-worm order — destitute of a redeeming charm. Do you think did he pay heed to any of this? Oh, no! Not at all! No honest thought came that the natural sequel of his shortcomings was that he could not enkindle love in one so lovely, and that common justice, owing to this disparity, demanded his smothering his love, and trampling it under foot. Far from it; no opportunity to show how ecstatically he was the victim of love's poetic vision was allowed to pass. Without loss of time, and with due ceremony, he offered his unattractive person to Evangelica; full of gentleness though she was, his dishonest disregard of his deficiencies angered her sufficiently to crisply make him answer: —

“Justice demands our looking on both

EVANGELICA

sides of every question ; and never viewing anything from our individual standpoint alone, the law is beauty attracts, and ungainliness repels ; the unattractive man should deal justly by this verdict, and never aim beyond himself. Owing to this, and other inequalities, your love is a deformity, for it is a one-sided affair ; so use your manliness to stamp it out."

So violently had he nursed his tender passion that he was felled by the unexpected nay ; had he summoned strength to battle against the telling blow all would have been well ; but no ! despondency gained him for its victim, and so unto the list of rash unfortunates who, weary of life, seek their own death, was added his name.

It was through the advances of suitors so far beyond her in station that their

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

rank fairly appalled her that this modest violet of the dell came to realize the full value of her worth ; and it was with sadness that she said them nay ; but nothing could alter her determination of living solely for her evangel and mother. Recollections of herself as a cruelly treated child never visited or troubled her ; the maxim of Epictetus : “ I am always content with that which happens ; for I think that what God chooses is better than what I choose,” she had made hers, and effectually did it bar the door against the intrusion of past bitterness into her new life.

When coaxed by her mother not to turn a deaf ear upon her suitors, oft would she go to her Master Marbles for consolation ; long would she gaze upon them, and such admiration did they engender within her that oftentimes she questioned whether there was not a soul sentinelled

EVANGELICA

within their cold, white forms. Man, thought she, must have chiselled a spark of his Being in that soul-like handiwork of his hand! "Oh! could I become one of them! Could I, breathing woman, step on a pedestal of stone, and become translated into spotless marble to attest what Will can do for man!" She had read tales of such miracles being wrought, but well she knew that myths alone they were. How then could she obtain the desired martyrdom? Why would not that Being, thought she, who once broke Heaven's laws unsought, and pierced the skies to comfort and console me, break them anew at my pleading? To Him will I petition my cause:—

"O Thou," pleaded she, "who when I was an hungered desolate child found such favor in Your eyes that You pierced Heaven's sky unsought, and personally

A GODDESS SELF-HEWN

came to comfort and console me, bow down Thine ear, and hearken to my plea:—if I have loyally brandished that weapon You bade me use to carve my way to You, how canst Thou but graciously accede to this petition of my martyrdom? Accept Thou the offer of my being; carve Thou it into a living stone, whose lasting dialect will proclaim to man what Will has done for one of earth's unfortunates."

Long did she linger awaiting a reply from that voiceless voice which had strengthened her when an isolated child,—but the answer was unheard; still did she feel that it had been duly registered with One whose power to accomplish it was not a myth, and determined to use against Heaven that weapon which had crumbled so much of earth at her feet, and with Will, and by the ardor of un-

EVANGELICA

ceasing prayer to thaw high Heaven into championing and granting her whim.

No thought of the utter loneliness of her mother, were she taken hence, dawned upon her; were her boon granted, fully would she rejoice; for in her marble garments would she not say unto man: — “Self must be ennobled by self,” and with this standard adopted was not man’s godship here?

These were not her mother’s views, however, high-principled though she was; no such thought could dawn on her mind when it came to a question of Evangelica being the martyr to be immolated, for she was the one light of her life, and with her gone all, she felt sure, would be darkness; but she did not so enlighten Evangelica when told of her proffered martyrdom; for, thought she, of what avail wasting moments discussing the impossible.

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER VII

“ 'T is the sublime of man,
Our noontide majesty, — to know ourselves,
Part and proportion of a wondrous whole.”

COLERIDGE.

EVANGELICA had now perfected her plans of publicly preaching her evangel; her friends had generously filled the coffer, and funds sufficient were raised to purchase a home wherein to proclaim its tenets; simple though they were, so thoroughly did she command the force, fulness, and flexibility of our noble tongue, so alive were her words with self and magnetic fire, that listless hearers were converted into fiery advocates. Pen could do naught but injustice to the music of her speech, so the gist of her tenets alone will be given.

EVANGELICA

Man, she declared, had no greater foe than those members of temperance crusades who seek to throw a halo of martyrdom around weak intoxicants by posing them as the victim of the ghostly frailties of their sires ; within us all — did we but listen — is a still small voice bidding us arise into higher form ; on probation only are we here ; only as we overcome can we be conquerors ; only as we overcome will be meted our reward. Look upon these vices in their proper light ; learn the purport of their being ours ; see them but as necessary tools ; look upon them as spiritual enemies through whose defeat alone we can lay claim to Heaven for our over-recompensed reward. Celestial aid is bountifully lent us in their attempted dethronement, but only to those who generously help themselves ; our vices, however legion, need cause us no appal ; the lesser

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

owner is not more favored than the greater ; for in proportion as we endeavor to overcome is mercy most bountifully meted.

It is by mind losing itself in soul that man is transubstantiated god ; and a constant intercommunion with our nearest self—the Author of our being—so clarifies it of its admixture of dross, so opens it to the promptings from on High, that thief, felon, and convict can if they will step outside of prison bars metamorphosed into a brand-new creature—a Jerry McCauley clothed in the livery of God. By mind losing itself in soul alone, is man transubstantiated god ; and by holding our minds in an attitude of love to God, and friendly good will to man, hatred, anger, suspicion, and envy are pitted against a colossus that will soon force their succumbing to opposing virtues ; a fire is applied to self-seeking and

EVANGELICA

indulgence which in time will consume them to the roots, and Nirvana's attainment placed within our grasp ; that state of peaceful tranquillity which unlocks us the door of the Kingdom of Heaven within ; that state of blissful serenity where man, standing as he does redeemed from the hankering love of sin, is granted absolving absolution to transgressions committed when he was that no longer existing creature — a creature of sin. But whilst sufferers from physical infirmities cheerfully undergo tortures to perfect a deformed member or make whole a diseased wound, gladly imbibe nauseating drugs to silence the painful twinge or heal the defective organ, yet will these moral patients scarce germ a desire for that potent giant Will which can — with Heaven's help — make whole the moral leper. Did we but labor in the vineyard

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

of Honor with one tithe of the zeal that the self-made man throws into his efforts, the doctrine of man's being morally enslaved scarce would have attained a focus. The law of Heredity is not an injustice, but a divine step-mother ordained for righteousness' sake, and is the highest earthly incentive man has to virtuous living; for his instinctive shielding of his young prompts the purging of these spectral heirlooms from him, and so avoid their inoculation upon those he intuitively loves. It is, moreover, medicinally requisite to him as a progressive being; for were we equally dowered in moral, intellectual, and worldly riches, life would be devoid of incentive to arise; stagnation would ensue; unmeaningless follow; and man reduced to a marionette, performing his functions without further aim or purpose. His mind needs be but in the key

EVANGELICA

of his Master's not to crumble into a mass of inertness at the stretching of these unholy phantoms across the gulf of time, ingrafting their corruption with his own ; but to arouse him like a warrior to do battle for their eviction, and germ a desire of iron to erase their foul stigmata off his soul. Imbue a man with a stout desire, and with what do you gift him? With a talisman that reaps him the boon for which he yearns ; — for desire begets Will, and Will is what? A miracle-worker whose very name engenders might ; a natural force of Nature which dominates all others, without whose unison man is powerless to overthrow the physical, or attain the supremacy of his powers ; — its non-acquirement brands him criminal, for it sows his weakness, reaps his downfall, and reduces him to a non-resistant piece of pulp. Inherited maladies are the out-

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

growth of broken laws ; their erasing demands a zealous will, and an eager soul ; mind, the exponent of the soul, rules the body upon which it reacts, and the nearer we approach our God, the closer we come to excellency of health ; — for body automatonly assumes the complexion of mind and heart. Let gentle Peace but once own sway of our being, and a co-relative change takes place throughout our entire organism ; every nerve and fiber feels her tranquillizing influence, which speaks us of Paradise, and the deliciousness of rest ; the brain cells, stimulated to healthy action, cause the gloom of dyspepsia's unhappy picturing to disappear ; the breathing assumes a long-drawn soothing rhythm, which expands the lungs, feeds the blood with the primary, life-sustaining principle oxygen in such goodly portion that the

EVANGELICA

gnawing demon of drunkenness is administered its most deadening potion; a halo of brightness is placed before our eyes through which all things are seen from an optimistic standpoint, and our mental, spiritual, and physical development assured. The law of Heredity trespasses not upon Happiness' all-satisfying domain; for from the labor of his hands does he choose the vineyard for which he was ordained; and from fulfilling the instinct within him to arise into higher form, and completer development, dwells the sum-total of the sources of man's happiness here below. Wealth, Prosperity, and Fame may accord their votaries unsatisfying pleasures,—hollow gayety,—and barren mirth, but are powerless to admit one gleam of Happiness' elysian delights into their lives.

“Will,” then, is the magic Genii who

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

can strip the rags and tatters off Heredity's offspring, and emancipate their shackled bodies and souls ; — she is the enchanted wizard by the might of whose strong arm we are enabled to barricade our freedom against the unseen encroachments of spectral impurities ; defend our beings against the subtile invasion of phantom taints ; develop and maintain our separate individuality ; and compose an Essay of Life exclusively our own. For the genesis of the theory that its powers is ours, we will have to retrace our steps to the primeval days of man ; for the command given our first parents in the Garden of Eden : — “ Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die,” — clearly inculcates free-will and self-determined destiny to be ours, and gives weight to Buddha's hoary

EVANGELICA

words: "Self is the Lord of Self; who else should be the Lord?"

Such was her simple evangel; its magical effects came not so much from its truth, or the fascinating weaving of her words, — which were coined in a heart so intoxicated with its subject that they reached her hearers alive, and became translated into energy in their souls, — but from the fact that more grandeur, more nobility, shone forth through her person than could either be pictured or expressed; she was the force that gave proof to the evangel; she was the power behind the Gospel that crumbled into zero the doctrine of man's limited or unlimited spiritual captivity. Freely she unveiled her life's history; publicly she unmasked her savage encounter with self; unreservedly she proclaimed what Will, the Omnipotent, had wrought in her; — false shame,

LIVING FOR PRINCIPLES

empty pride, had no existence for her when weighed in the balance against the hope that her life's story, with the minor chord that it contained, would act as a beacon light to torpid wayfarers, inspire them to cast inertia to the dogs, and arouse them to be Cæsar unto themselves.

Émile Souvestre tells us that at the sight of the Apollo Belvedere the body erects itself, and that in the same manner our souls are raised, and ennobled by a good man's life. Even so were the followers of Evangelica uplifted by the beauty of her countenance — which reflected the Divine within — and the god-like grace of her soul; and this sacramental intercourse so attuned their souls to the harmony of hers, that they became inflamed with zeal to emulate her ascent in their own proper persons. Peace, joy,

EVANGELICA

and content were shed upon her votaries by their priestly Evangelist, for like an elemental force she radiated them from her over-imbued person ; and so over-charged was she with the mighty giant Will that its force reacted upon them, and was infused into their very souls. Thus we will leave her advocating her dogma of Will being a material force which can gigantize man into a biblical Michael, gravitate him into an uncontrollable beast, in direct ratio as he is monarch or beggar of its all-conquering potency, and betake ourselves to Dinah with the hope that the irrepressible will furnish us with some sprightly refreshments, and so relieve the too sombre complexion of our tale.

CHAPTER VIII

“ Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles,
Come, and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe.”

JOHN MILTON.

AFTER years of undying endeavor the irrepressible had succeeded in getting herself safely ensconced in a matrimonial halter ;—of strong texture it was, too, for the partner of her lightness of spirit and heaviness of heart did not approve of the conjugal joke getting smashed to pieces on account of domestic infelicity or family strife ; oh, no ! he considered it a bargain for better or for worse ; and

EVANGELICA

although but a month had elapsed since the sealing of the contract, he concluded himself the owner of the worst side of the affair. Her illustrious mate was a widower with two grown-up daughters when Dinah secured him for her individual self; he was, nevertheless, a catch of considerable moment, for he possessed a snug little capital which he had himself amassed. The pomposity with which he viewed himself can best be shown by the fact that his parents had bestowed upon him the plain appellation of Ebenezer Smith; but when fortune smiled upon him this was no longer regarded as a suitable designation for his pompous person, so the law was invoked, and Hamilton Christopher Hamblin made replace it. He had always exacted the most subservient submission from his underlings; he would simply say—do this,

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

do that, — and it was done accordingly, else the refractory individual was made quickly disappear in search of another situation. His pet failing had always been, right or wrong, he must have his own way; but lo! he commenced to fairly shake in his boots, for Dinah did not exhibit the least symptom of fulfilling the marriage contract and unquestionably obeying his imperial edicts, but seemed to consider herself sole owner of the entire matrimonial concern. Not the remotest resemblance did she wear to Mary's little lamb; on the contrary, she talked up her side of the case, in every difficulty, with the ardor of a locomotive running against time; until Mr. Pomposity, fearing deafness from the incessant buzz, and dumbness from the inability of his silenced member getting any exercise while Dinah's was around, ceded the

EVANGELICA

right of way from sheer exhaustion. It was through her laughing nature that Dinah had paved the way to his heart ; it was her merry eyes, and we might add her merry form — for every inch of her seemed to have a most delightful time upon every festive occasion — that had made his heart flow in an outlet of love towards her. But strange coincidence, these cherubim proclivities evidently vanished upon the consummation of the marriage contract, and in their stead appeared the characteristics of a domineering Amazon ; — for like a Tartar of the most pronounced type she proceeded to lord it over her astounded spouse. If we peep behind the scenes, however, we will learn that she but assumed the Amazonian mask for the fun of chuckling in private over the great discomfort exhibited by her lord, when virago-fashion she check-

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

mated his hitherto unquestioned authority. Let us quote from herself: —

“It’s just as good as a merry-go-round to this chicken to see that Mr. Pomposity trembling with horrified horror at the thought that he’s gone and yoked himself to a coming woman who will usurp his masculine prerogatives inside and outside of the family circle ; — why, it’s as merry as a circus to watch him wheel into line, abdicate himself in my favor, and swallow in his fiftieth year the awful dose of having his imperial decrees sat down upon and vetoed.”

But a merry twinkle he surprised in her eyes at last betrayed that good-natured Dinah was still alive, and existed *sub rosa* behind that Amazonian mask which she had but assumed for the amusement his discomfort in having to subordinate his sweet will occasioned

EVANGELICA

her; so he determined to cut off further supplies by bringing arguing to a close, and conceding what it was useless to contest. Her home was as bright as an unclouded sky, and were it not for the unceasing buzz of her too active member, it would have been an Eden of delight; but alas! that too industrious motor simply ding-donged without end; — if any one happened around, an exhaustive stream was poured forth for their persecuted benefit; when left alone, it kept right along for the delight of its most admiring auditor — herself. Even calmy sleep did not bring it rest, but laboriously it employed its time rehearsing discourses to be delivered upon some future occasion. This particular tongue belonged to a species now almost extinct, for to her credit be it said, Dinah could keep it on continuous trot for six months — nay, six

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

years — and not an ungenerous remark could be sifted from the unboundable tone delivered. But its monotonous hum so wore upon Mr. Hamilton Christopher Hamblin that he commenced to assume a twin resemblance to a skeleton ; — so visible was his shrinking from both food and clothes. How to check that buzzing motor and thwart the destiny of getting ding-donged into the grave, he could not solve. Arguing had been given up, it had been found of no avail ; suddenly he bethought him of testing the working capacity of a bribe. So very subserviently he offered Dinah any gift she might choose to mention, if she, on her part, would agree to cut down the rate of her daily delivery to the limit employed by an average member of the human species. A concert grand, — which would render more harmonious her melo-

EVANGELICA

dious voice, — a silken gown of finest texture, — hoping, however that she would not choose orange satin trimmed with black lace, but something more in tune with the strong tints of her ebony shading ; — in fact, anything that she desired to mention was hers, for the mere agreeing to cut down the daily outpour of her over-industrious motor to the quantity employed by one of ordinary calibre. Let us give Dinah's own answer to the bribe : —

“ Well, now, you *have* succeeded in taking me by storm, Mr. Hamilton Christopher, — by the way, why did n't you attach Columbus onto yourself while you were about it? What's in a name, sarcastically exclaim them philosophers ! Himâlayas are in them is my answer to their conundrum ! Why, I'd feel a heap higher-toned, a great deal further up in

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

the atmosphere, if Columbus had been appended to the family title! But, as I was going to remark before I interrupted myself, you've struck me with a blizzard, —one that's going to do some tall ciphering in your favor, too, for next to the too persistent activity of my talking apparatus, love of gifts is the next weakest peccadillo that I own. So I'll betake myself hence, and proceed to make your lingual limitations the subject of careful computation, and will duly report you my terms for limiting my loquacious over-communicativeness safely within the confines of your hearing capabilities."

Not long did he have to wait upon the anxious stool, for Dinah very shortly reappeared upon the scene wearing a sort of constrained air, as if she feared her side of the stipulation would be too much for Mr. Hamilton Christopher Hamblin's finan-

EVANGELICA

cial digestion ; but her tongue, nothing daunted, proceeded to boom her side of the case.

“ Well, now, Mr. (H. C. H., will have to do, can’t go through the extensive repetoire every trip, uses up too much breath entirely) I ’m here, and my verdict is along with me ; but for the life of me I can’t make out to whom these worldly goods that I ’m about to ask for belong to ! Now, didn’t you endow me with the whole of your worldly possessions ? Well — I ’ve never got treated to a blessed hold of them ; (they ’d have evaporated into ether upon introduction if I had). Now hearken to the verdict : — the transfer that will bind me *bona fide* to restrain the limit of my lightning-express member safely inside the confines used by the speaking individual of ordinary verbosity is, that you take three

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

thousand dollars out of them funds that you endowed me with, and never treated me to a blessed sight of, and pass them over to this autumnal chicken in such a manner as will be audible to the naked eye, and that you'll furthermore agree not to go on a voyage of discovery — like that namesake of yours whose nomenclature you've adopted — to ascertain what happened the funds."

The honorable gentleman coolly calculated within himself, her figures are massive, tremendously so, but they're the cheapest side of the bargain after all; — I'd best take Dinah up on her terms, her word is gold, there's no question about that, and to take her up seems the only outlet of my escaping a speedy incasement in a wooden shroud, which I'm mighty adverse about entering. Forthwith he wheeled around, drew out a check to the

EVANGELICA

full amount of the demand, and handed it to the astounded Dinah, whose prancing eyes and total exhibition of glistening teeth told a tale of glad delight. In the surprise of the moment, she attributed this seeming spasm of generosity to an outflow pure and simple of love, and kindness of heart ; which belief in itself completely erased the Xantippe veneering she had assumed so long, and, no further obstacle to its egress being in the way, the latent milk and honey of her nature gushed freely forth.

“ Well, now, you precious you, you ’re going to know every bit about it ; there ’s not a blessed thing going to get hid from you at all, at all ; — so listen well, and I ’ll proceed to propound to you the phenomenon of what ’s going to happen them stamps.

“ Oh ! Sorry me ! This is the last unlimited chat my over-loquacious mem-

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

ber can ever know ; let the poor miscreant have all the say it wants in honor of the valedictory occasion ; henceforth it will have to get sentinelled around like a darkey in a watermelon patch, and made keep as mum as a flesh-and-blood spook at a materializing séance the moment it has issued as much daily vocabulary as a common every-day variety of its species.

“ Well, to spin as long a yarn out of a short story as possible, I ’ll begin by saying, that some un-Solomon philosophers promulgated a decree that man’s being able to move himself onwards to the sky was a prevaricating myth of the first magnitude variety ; folks too lazy to exert themselves caught onto the ‘ can’t do a blessed thing to help yourself philosophy ’ with astonishing alacrity ; hence the belief has rapidly gained ground that life ’s pretty much nothing more or less

EVANGELICA

than a game of sea-saw;—if the gray shadows of our ancestors who are singing hallelujahs on the golden shores of the New Jerusalem brand their spectral tatooing upon us, up we bounce in the direction of God Almighty and His celestial quarters; but, if our old granddaddies who are hullabalooing with agony down in Beelzebub's dominions make us a call, down bumps the teetotal of our spiritual mechanism in the direct line of his mighty infernal atmospheric quarters; and all the time we can't have a continental more say in the whole darned business than a broomstick dressed up in a man's clothes that they call a scarecrow to! Now common sense is the only commodity that's got grit enough in it to show off the idiocy of this unlearnedness, and to expose that there's nothing to this bull of these popes of science beyond a mass of frothy words.

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

My all but idol — who grew up under my eye and seems like a piece of my heart — has inaugurated a society for the emphatic purpose of demonstrating that man's not a scarecrow with pantaloons, vest, and collar-button on him ; but that the selfsame commodity used by the poor man to convert him into a moneyed king will curtail the gerrymandering of his ancestral hobgoblins into the privacy of his individual domain, if he'll only make use of a good stiff sample of it against them. These transferred stamps are going to swell the funds of this society of which I'm an honorable member, and am moreover organizing a class of Sambos and Dinahs for the express purpose of elucidating to their entire satisfaction : — firstly, that we got born for a purpose, — a set and definite one ; — secondly, that we're able to fulfill that

EVANGELICA

purpose, and accomplish it to the letter ; for the common-sense reason that Jehovah never was guilty of the bad misbehavior of sending us here on a fool's errand. You are to consider it your bounden duty to pay your good-looking spouse Dinah the gallantry of being the very first Sambo to apply for admission into the class ; let me run you off a sample of the golden rhetoric with which I 'm going to Chrysostomon the scholars ; you 'll never be able to keep yourself out of it after that : —

“ Ye moneyed men, how came ye by your gold ? Did it walk itself out of the mint, coin itself for your advantage, and wing its flight into your pocket-books ? Oh, no ! it was by toiling in the day, and far into the night, too, — when the improvident were asleep or carousing, — that the filthy, but awfully-yearned-for lucre was made yours. See you not then that

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

it is but the symptom of a jaundiced liver, of a mind in its apogee from reason and common sense to assert that 'Will' is monarch to effect our worldly aggrandisement, and deny its potency in our spiritual upbuilding? What is it in its minor sense, but a force that gives weight, that yields power into every act that it accompanies! Did we sit with crossed hands, the world would own naught but paupers; yet it is crossed hands, nay, I assert it is crossed hands alone, that leaves us moral slaves. Man earns his bread with pickaxe and shovel, — and the banker's and broker's pickaxe and shovel have more goading weight than the freed-from-care travail of the laboring man, — did we but attack our spiritual iniquities with a spade, their lion rampantism for despotic sway would be stilled into a low, soft tone that could scarce be heard. In its major and

EVANGELICA

largest sense what is Will? ‘A material force like that of steam, so divinely potent that nothing in the moral world can resist its power, if a man accustoms himself to concentrate it, to hold it in hand, and to direct the propulsion of its fluid mass upon the consciousness of others;—a man possessing this power can modify all things relating to humanity as he pleases, even the laws of nature.’ The doctrine that its power is ours is not alone to be found in Genesis, but in the teachings of that greatest of all masters—Christ; and is effectually proved by Goldsmith, Haydn, Thorwaldsen, Titian, Angelo, and most of our great men who were “born mud, if they did die marble.”

“Will, then, is the fairy *Ulgelda* who exacts but a hearty want on our part to lend the magic of her might to our cause; blot from off our souls the unhallowed

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

signatures of our sires ; open us wide the gates leading into godly pastures and enchanting meadows ; robe us in raiment of celestial texture ; and enable us compose an Essay of Life exclusively our own. . . .

“There, now, Mr. Hamilton Christopher Hamblin, how does the munificence of that royally ermined English strike you? Deacon Jones could n’t have taken me up on that flow of delivery if he’d been lucky enough to have been around; I’m as dead sure as I can be that there’s St. John Chrysostom lurking around inside of me waiting for an opportunity in the shape of an education to boom out and let this ‘Light of Africa’ illuminate the world. Christopher Columbus—I don’t care where he be—won’t be any happier than this autumnal chicken when she gets upon that plat-

EVANGELICA

form, and delivers it away by the square mile upon that audience of color, who'll have to sit around mum as Julius Cæsar, and not be able to get a word in edgewise. But it would be just as well worth my while to have a frozen icicle for an audience as you ; for there you sit, and take it all in without any more show of ebullition about you than an ice-cream soda ; I tell you what it is, you ain't got any more enthuse in you to enthusiasm upon, than a dead monkey who never had any brains.

“ Well, for the sake of honest candor I'd best initiate you into the veracity of the fact that there's hardly a word in the whole oration that belongs to me ; I heard Miss Evangelica deed away the whole performance on an assembly of lucred aristocrats ; nevertheless, whenever I've redelivered the private property of



““ It would be just as well worth my while to have a frozen icicle
for an audience as you.””

CONVERSATION CAPITALIST

other individuals prior to this, I've got them in the jungle of a snarl, and given them away in the Hades of a tangle; but I've succeeded so admirably in this, that my hopes of attaining the attitude of a professional platform discourser have been boomed tremendously. Well, I can't keep it a-going at this break-neck speed much longer, and as I don't care to listen to you just at present, I'd best betake myself off in an opposing location; but mind, you're not to get uneasy because you hadn't any say in this confab, the occurrence will never get repeated again; henceforth and forever afterwards I'll never deliver you more than two full periods at a time; then I'll come to a dead standstill, and wait like a lady of aristocratic lineage (expect I'll have to bite the tongue pretty nearly off myself upon the first two or three occasions)

EVANGELICA

until you've consumed all the spare dictionary words you wish to expend."

The conversational capitalist kept her word; although her lingual abstinence cost her so severe that for the first few months she was a most melancholy exhibit of the sackcloth and ashes within.

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

CHAPTER IX

“Sculptor of souls, I lift to Thee
Encumbered heart and hands ;
Spare not the chisel, set me free
However dear the bands.”

EVANGELICA was deeply touched by the fealty expressed in Dinah's regal offering to the treasury of her cause ; and deeply touched, too, by the loyal fervor of the surprising number of adherents who had pledged the weaving of her evangel into their lives ; so enthusiastic was their fervor for the well-being of her cause that they decreed to make the second anniversary of its establishment a jubilee of gladness, and a pæan of heart-felt joy. The anniversary came upon a day — which was a day — in June ; one of those days of days upon which Nature seems

EVANGELICA

holding a Sabbath of her own, and proclaiming with fiery tongues the existence of One brimful of love for His exiled children of earth. Not more legibly is the gospel of His Being and boundless love written in the Book of books than upon the face of Nature ; the sea — which ever since it was begot has ebbed and flowed unerringly submissive to His mandates — sings it in the dulcet murmur of its waters ; the workmanship of the world — with its laws of day and night, springtime and winter yet to be unheeded or broken — chants it in a sublime pæan of majesty ; the chorus of planets above, the choir of brilliantly-arrayed flowerets below — reveal it in a symphony eloquent with pathos ; while the aspiring peaks, the proud Himâlayas — which lifting their kingly brows soar towards Heaven's forbidden precinct, breathing into the fervent

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

beholder quieting calm and peace even as if the Spirit of their Maker was entempled within them,—proclaim it louder and more emphatic than them all.

How comes it then that man has been known to stand face to face with Nature's sacerdotal teachings and deny existence to One Supreme? Neither intellect nor reason can insure the vision of the inner eye; to the pure of heart its regal birth-right severely belongs; only in proportion as the divine spark within is accordant to its kinly Link above is the darkening cataract removed from off man's spiritual vision, is he qualified to interpret the things of Heaven aright; once let him be transformed from the contracted man of self into the expansive man of God, and his entire angle of vision takes on a complete change; down from off his eyes drops the impermeable veil of im-

EVANGELICA

purity ; into mist is chased the thickened gloom of ignorance and doubt ; a flood of spiritual light is poured in, which illuminates his heart, and gives birth to that clear-sightedness of vision which belongs solely to liberated man. Nay, not with the intellect, nor with the reason, but with the eyes of the soul godly-adjusted and pure, are the things of the soul rightly discerned ; and the unbelief of the atheist is the natural result of the spiritual eye of his soul being blinded by his dark bondage to materiality and sin. Man is a double being :—a spiritual entity, or real self—soul ; and a passing reality, or apparent self—body ; let his unbeliefs and convictions be the verdict of his senses or material mind, then are they faulty and devoid reliance ; but, if to his double being he is just, and prayerfully submits the testimony of senses, science,

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

and philosophy to the perceptive faculty of his soul, then are they honest and dependable.

For this clear insight Evangelica had alway striven, realizing that its light of lights alone could unfold her unto the reception of that wonderful truth called God ; emancipate her from that ephemeral non-self—the body ; and expand her into a god of love — unto whom the God of All stands fully manifested and revealed.

What thoughts must have been hers upon that festive day as she stood on the platform of the Evangel Home, surrounded by offerings of floral gems bespeaking her the love of their givers' hearts ; with an unbroken sea of faces in front, the gladly light of whose shining countenances told the wealth of worth she had been to them. There she stood in

EVANGELICA

her flowing robes of white, the perfect repose of her countenance proclaiming a heart serenely at peace ; while the sunniness of its light betrayed her possession of that rarest of all charms : — childhood of the heart. “ Whom the gods love die young,” — they never wax old ; for no matter how wintry life’s blasts may beat or blow upon them, their hearts neither wither nor grow cold, but are ever as verdantly fresh as the gladsome days of the opening spring.

In the depths of her eyes scintillated the divine fires of genius ; the purple genius of talking gold like Chrysostom, and holding men spellbound under the magic clothing of her thoughts. So fosteringly had she nurtured the Pearl of greatest price within, that God and her soul had come to dwell companionably together, and be, one unto the other, even



“There she stood in her flowing robes of white.”

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

as a unit; intuitively she discerned His truths; with a zest she interpreted the inspired lights to the exiled offsprings of His Spirit; giving them forth in such a fascinating torrent of magnetic power that her words were coined into energy in their souls; making the spiritual laggards realize, suckle, and foster that Angel dormant within them, who alone can uplift us all to the Divine, and whose mysterious destiny it is to live unceasingly forever. Entirely had she hearkened unto princely Buddha's precept of renunciation; — the unsatisfying baubles of life in which she could claim naught outside a life interest, were to her unsavory, and devoid of relish; completely was her intellect consecrated to her calling; entirely was her heart betrothed to her mission; and so gently was it tyrannically monarch of her being, that a chastity of mind and

EVANGELICA

heart was imposed upon her which was quite unfelt.

The bulk of religions contain either a myth, or a truth — as witness the gentle Jesus — of God coming down to man, and teaching him the pathway of ascent ; by absorbing emanations from the souls of God or god-men ; by their celestial light and essence being shed and diffused upon them, are the spiritual appetites of their submerged brethren awakened, are they spurred on over the narrow way with its painful thorns and briers, in quest of that golden Helen of Troy — their *only* other self — the Maḥatma of us all, who alone can quench the mitred yearnings of the human heart.

It has been said that flowers bloom their fairest in the garden of those who love them ; they have need of the caressing tenderness of the lover's touch, the

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

heart-warmth of the endearing look, to thwart the too unkindly blasts that fain would nip them, and foster and fondle their latent beauty until it blooms forth arrayed in the full perfection of its loveliness. Just so with the children of men ; rule them with a rod of love, not the offshoot of the tongue, but the genuine outflow of a compassionate heart, — and they respond with all the wealth of love latent within them. So warm was the response of Evangelica's adherents to her golden rule of love, that that devotion so charmingly full of disinterestedness — the love of disciple for master — was ardently enkindled within them ; that love from whose spell there is no sad awakening, no day of disenchantment ; for being fed on intrinsic worth and virtue, its flames are faithfully nurtured, and it burns without flicker forever. Nobly was she worthy

EVANGELICA

of their allegiance, for the impossible had been accomplished by her, and the ordained end of existence fulfilled; having through incessant pleadings won high Heaven to second her efforts, she had in one short decade dematerialized her animal self; toiled at her nature of hate until it was made synonymous to love, and through its magic instrumentality alone, metamorphosed her being from out of mortal into god divine. Herein lies the sum-total of the mission of man on earth; decreed it has been that he himself must toil at his nature of hate until its rotten foulness is purged from out him and it is made accordant to its kinly Link above;—and the life of that man who makes the hollow gains and empty pleasures of earth his sole end and object is as vacantly wasted as a bubble of soap blown from the toy pipe of the little child.

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

This was the height of heights our little waif had attained, the grandly height of a spiritual goddess, the celestial height of those great souls, the incarnations of God on earth, in whom poor, tottering humanity seeing religion not emptily preached, but veritably alive in their person, hungrily let them take them by the hand ; greedily let themselves be brought forward to the light ; yearningly let their natures be unfolded unto the reception of that wonderful truth called God, who alone can quench the hungered cravings of the human heart. Even so did the followers of Evangelica hunger for her words and presence on that festive anniversary day ; for her words, because they supplied that almost extinct luxury of giving satisfying food to the hunger of their souls ; for her presence, which was so queenly head and shoulders above

EVANGELICA

mediocre man that it was a feast and rest to the eye, and bore witness to the truth of her gospel that "Love is able in itself to effect man's beatification, and regenerate him inside and out." Unsullied she stood before them, though clad in that beauty which the poet tells us walks hand in hand with anguish "the downward slope of death." To its "proud strength" she had been true, and to its source, the Author of the Beautiful, it had been duly consecrated; thus her wisdom was not dethroned by the adoration it compelled; thus she lost not her foothold upon her dizzy mountain height; and thus was not inveigled into the numerous pitfalls that beset the pathway of all mortals who are too closely like the gods. Her heart answered not the army of less favored suitors that besought her, and to barter self that sickly sentimentality might be

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

shown them — she would not ; to her race she belonged ; her godlike beauty, her words of gold, her rank of mortal celestial, gave humanity in general the titular right to claim her as their own, and to exact her using her purple endowments for their upliftance and betterment ; of what import then the preying lamentations of individual suitors who fain would have her use them all for the advantage of their covetous selves ?

There is nothing that does the eye of man more good than to see one of their kind — one of themselves — stand before them a god or goddess celestially beautiful, giving them that highest ideal of the Beautiful to be had here below ; — ideal far surpassing the soul-work bequeathed us by greatest masters ; far beyond any scene depicted for us in mountain, lake, or dell ; such beings exhale a fragrance

EVANGELICA

redolent of Heaven about them, and in their presence the unbeliever cannot retain his ungodly lack of faith. Only ill-favored bigots cheapen the value of beauty, — no more masterly incentive can subterraneous man have to exorcise the demon that belittles him; no more impelling motor force to constrain his willing entrance into the ennobling service of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. Such was the use Evangelica had made of her “fatal gift of beauty.”

With her heart wrapt in her work, and with great earnestness of feeling, she proceeded to deliver the anniversary discourse. After expressing satisfaction at the success that had attended her efforts, after giving thanks for the hearty help with which they had championed her cause, she proceeded to give her adherents new light on her dogma of “Man’s

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

being master of his fate, monarch of his destiny, and able to make of himself whatever is the heartfelt craving of his soul."

We are, she claimed, nothing more or less than a crude edition of wholesome and unwholesome quotations from the thousand generations of ancestors who have preceded us ; a compendium of their festering virus ; unwilling inheritors of their nauseating heirlooms ; our family jewels taking the tainted form of drunkenness, which makes its victims synonymous to swine ; sensual gluttony, which places him parallel to the brute ; minor vices or smaller meannesses, which belittle him to the subterranean rank of man-dwarf. But, even as fire exists unseen in the piece of flint, so does the celestial seeds of man's godship lie smouldering in the midst of this purulent corruption ;

EVANGELICA

the supreme effort of his will is the friction which brings out the inner fire that can consume these phantom transgressors, and ripen into fruition the germs of that god lying dormant within him. An unwillingness to enter into contest with these hydra-headed spectres entails sorrow without much alloy of mirth here, and a bitterness that pinches hereafter. Our vices were not given for our debauchment, but rather for our glorious resurrection and ascent. Has not St. Augustine taught us to frame of them a ladder on which to mount to our home on high? Did we but trample them manfully underfoot, our every inclination to thought and act whose root is evil could be made to serve as just so many rungs in this celestial ladder, from whose round we could climb to the more spiritual rung above. Over the wrecks of ignoble desires and base designs

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

we can scale our ascent to the proud summit of gigantic man, with the cheering consciousness that our every step forward knits us in closer degree of kinship to our God, and brings us in nearer nearness to Him. It is a law eternal that man is not what his ancestors were, but what he himself makes himself; his efforts or non-efforts make or break him in the end, and place him in his self-earned quarter sooner or later. Search the history of the world and you will find that the gigantic sons of men who have distinguished themselves head and shoulders above their fellows have been, without exception, men with huge, enormous wills, and most stupendous workers; and nothing is surer than that the devil's hoof is stamped upon the brow of any man who is lazily indifferent to his fate, or humbly thinks himself too feebly-weak to offer it resistance. Endow

EVANGELICA

a man with the nature of a seraph, and if he does not do battle with strenuous efforts for its retention, like unto the Prince of Light who became submerged into the king of demons, frail impurities and human passions will gnaw their entrance into his whitened tabernacle, and there becoming materialized into imps of unrighteousness, will forge the chains of his evil bondage and downfall.

Does not the body degenerate without work? Are not the sedentary universally weaklings? Is not physical exercise imperative for physical strength and vigor? Are not temptations overcome the only food man has upon which to grow spiritually strong, and wax in grace and wisdom? How but by the patient suffering of injuries can the peacefulness of the forgiving spirit be imparted? How but through afflictions nobly borne can the

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

soothing lesson of fortitude be taught us? How but by the laying on of violent hands are we enabled to harness our handful of perishable atoms, and hold the reins of mastership over it?

Without exercising resistance, without being positively polarized, man is the easy slave to all manner of noxious influences. Can he but gain a sympathetic link to work on, the will of an individual may be infused into the being of another, and unless repelled by will-force can saturate the psychic self of that other with thoughts and desires of his own emanation, benumb the moral sense of the one intruded upon, and give the spur to his baser instincts and appetites. The precept of St. Paul: "Be not deceived: Evil company doth corrupt good manners," teaches moral taint to be infectious; and warns us that "He who touches pitch shall be

EVANGELICA

defiled thereby." Even as the susceptible body absorbs the virus of infectious disease, so does the negatively polarized man, when brought in contact with a degraded personal magnetism, absorb its vicious emanations into his psychic self as long as he remains within reach of the moral contagion. The remedy lies in his becoming active instead of passive; the sensitive must have his sensitiveness destroyed: this will effectually end his becoming "obsessed" by the evil magnetism of others.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves," and it is pretty safe to assert that will-force is the thermometer which registers the success of the man within his calling, whether his sphere be little or great; "I will" has invariably been the text of all great men, and the regal man of genius has been without exception the

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

gigantic man of work who found the recompense of his labor in the very toil itself. Shakespeare, Michael Angelo, Dante, Goethe, were immense "torrents of will," whose work brought them that tranquillity of spirit which is born of "man loving what he commands himself to do."

We can see by this how futile it is for us to sit by the wayside, and cry the passers-by for aid ; for we alone can come to our assistance ; we alone can lend it the mighty aid of that giant champion — Help. Ignorance weakens our weakness, therefore does it behoove us to become familiar with the laws of our nature, with the precepts of hygiene, and knowing them turn them to the account of our upliftance and betterment ; using them as allies to accomplish the end in view.

Not for the purpose of downing that

EVANGELICA

immortal spark, which like Banquo's ghost will not down, have we been placed here ; not with the intent of making religion a matter of dogmatic argumentation, bigotry to creed, ecclesiastical pageantry, or musical display, but for the sole end and aim of our melting the poisonous hate of our nature into the golden perfectness of love, which will weave our close resemblance unto that God with Whom we bear ties of kin ; — for God is synonymous to Love, and love can expand our little being into god.

It was through becoming self-centred, through conceiving himself a unit instead of unity, through unlinking himself from the universe, that man shrivelled from spiritual god into an apparent being — body ; *nothing* but the opposing virtue can restore him his forfeited estate ; nothing but the expansive force of love

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

can redilate him to his lost dimensions. Even as the West recedes from us as we approach the East, so does evil drop off us as we near love universal; hatred, anger, untruthfulness, and envy are burned out by its living fires; and by holding our minds in an attitude of universal love, discord is given an antidote upon which it cannot thrive; by slow degrees the non-self dies, the real being discloses itself, and step by step we find ourselves rebecoming one with the universe. It is the nearness of our approach to the image of God within, it is the closeness of our communion to this inner "storehouse of knowledge and bliss," that gauges the corresponding degree of wisdom and happiness allotted to all sons of men, whether they be lowly peasant, or aristocrat burdened with millions. Religion is not theology, religion is love;

EVANGELICA

theology has been added to and taken from, but nothing is so solidly permanent as religion; it was at the first dawn of creation what it will be even after the solar system has passed away. Love is not only an emotion, it is a primary force, an essential substance out of which our spiritual being is made; it is our inmost nature; love of some sort must needs dominate our being, and as our ruling love is, just so are we. On our mortal side we inherit the deformities of our ancestors, vices which are negative and capable of being destroyed; on our spiritual side we are made in the image of God; heirs of His nature, and inheritors of His enduring attributes in a finite degree. On our mortal part, we are but a seeming reality; on our spiritual side, real and eternal. Love, Truth, Purity, Goodness; these are our spiritual

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

heirlooms, and although as progressive beings we must needs be permitted to pursue evil if we so choose, still is it but of human origin, a perversion of Good negative and destructible, and needs but be pitted against the positive force of Good to crumble into the inert nothingness out of which it sprung. It is the degree of our sameness, our indentity, that gauges the degree of our intimacy, the friendliness of our hearts ; — God is Love, in proportion as we are Love does He become our all-satisfying companion. Then throw your skulls, cross-bones, and oft-repeated prayers to the winds, ye near-sighted mortals of earth ; it is love, and love alone, that settles your worth, character, and immortal destiny ; in proportion as you love noble or base will you rise or fall, and your success is gauged by the force of its intensity. O unholy

EVANGELICA

St. Anthonys, who use gloom, scourge, and oft-repeated prayer as stepping-stones to save your individual selves, think of the futility of your weapons when the sight of beauty rouses naught but the covetous yearnings of that animal non-self your vacuum tools have not o'er-mastered; blasphemous non-saints, who promulgated woman to be the cause of all evil, the stumbling-block to man's rise and progress! Can man truthfully be man with a character so infantile that he is reducible to a cipher,—convertible to a tool? Not by him who was man in its true sense—a male of manly qualities; a perfect equipoise between spirit and matter—was this knell of man's effeminate weakness ever tolled. Then fling melancholy, gloom, dismal sadness, and depressing ungainliness from you; they with doubt, fear, ignorance,

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

weakness, and misconception are attributes of Satan, and cannot help resembling you to him ; — Peace, Love, Truth, Intelligence, Wisdom, Goodness, Harmony, Perfection, — these are elements of Jehovah, constituents of His Being ; cultivate along these lines, *they* cannot help but reach you to Him. Let the circle of your love forever widen and widen, and its all-inclusiveness will exclude all evil ; selfishness will be swallowed up in selflessness ; and love with its joy and music, from the bondage of matter, will set you free. Contemplate Perfection, — hold intercourse with the Beautiful ; become companionable to the rustic flower of the field ; it holds the wisdom of a sage behind that innocent face which it will gladly impart to him who is simple of heart. Breathe in unison with the pomp and magnificence of the western sky —

EVANGELICA

that glorious symbol of the Gates of Gold ; become one with the peerless orb of day as it departs from us to lift the veil of darkness from off other lands ; contemplate the twilight illumination of the west ; the answering rainbow of glory in the east ; the picturing of the fairy landscape on the bosom of the Deep ; the responsive murmur of its waters to the scene ; the solemn stillness that steals o'er Nature at this calm vespertine ; commune with them, they are a visible prayer, saying audibly to the soul of that man white enough to hear : — “ We are witnesses of that Invisible you in your mortal garments cannot see ; echoes of the sublime greatness of His power ; tokens of that upholding love which alone can uplift you to Him ; heralds, trumpeting you to fritter not your precious life away ; beyond these Gates of Gold there

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

is *that* which it can never enter the mind of man to conceive ; then be up and doing, labor at your allotted task, heed not the goading efforts it will cost, Heaven is your over-recompensed reward ;— learn yourself to be no unit, but an indispensable part of a wondrous indivisible whole, and come into harmony, into oneness with the Universe.”

This being the purport of our exile, think you we stand unequal to the task ? that we have been sent to fulfil the impossible, or accomplish the unaccomplishable ? Let us turn to Mother Nature for reply. The brilliantly-bedecked firmament, so eloquently proclaiming us the glorious glory of God ; the brightly-arrayed flowers and flowerets, so pathetically conveying us how tenderly He is mindful of our welfare ; the majestic hills and peaks with the rest and peacefulness

EVANGELICA

that they impart; the prattling brook with the soothing rhythm of its lay,— are divine hieroglyphics which make us answer: “Nay, our Creator could not be guilty of the heartlessness of so inhuman a jest;” and inhuman jest life certainly is, if there is no future brightness for us to toil for here, and reap the fruition thereof in the glad beyond. Whence then this clamor of our powerlessness to effect this translation, which the debasing condition of the masses would seem to bear out? Too much effort has been squandered towards its achievement in unfruitful directions; too much labor has been wasted towards its attainment in unprofitable methods, and non-reaping toil. Too much dependence have we placed on the vacuum power of bells, ritual, and candles; too much time uselessly expended in the hollow bending of the knee to the cross;

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

too much have we hankered after the churchianity idolatry of the darkened ages, and wasted our efforts in the vain repetition of prayer; too much has the truthful aim and object of religion been sacrilegiously misrepresented us, which consists neither in hearing, supplication, nor in intellectual assent; but in being, in becoming, in aspiration, in realization, in unprejudicedly seeking that rightful creed whose aid will enable us alchemize our being of hate into a god-man of love; — who teaches aught else bears false witness against the religion of that gentle Christ who spoke us naught but to become even as the little child, full of condoning charity, trusting faith, and honest simplicity of heart. St. John, the dearly beloved, has proved us its height of heights can be attained; over the trampled wrecks of fleshy longings St. Augustine

EVANGELICA

scaled his way upward unto Heaven's
widely-opened door; many lesser lights,
many spiritual suns, by accepting it as
their life's text, that

“ Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day,”

have attained such lofty heights of purple
nobility that they proclaim us the truth
of these encouraging words : —

“ Man is his own star ; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, all influence, all fate ;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our facts our Angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

Scarce had Evangelica finished these oft-
quoted lines than there took place a scene
without words of such mystical intensity
and dramatic effect that it would require
the pen of a Dante to faithfully render

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

it, or the brush of a Doré to truthfully bring it to light. A slight shudder shook her frame as if surprised by some unforeseen occurrence, and her countenance assumed an expression of most intent listening. But to what? No voice was heard! To the voiceless voice of her childish youth saying yea to the petition of her marble martyrdom it must have been; for a halo of glory environed her person as if a beatified Presence was with her, a satisfied smile beamed upon her lips, and her countenance assumed the contented expression of an enrapt Madonna. Then did she slowly turn her face upwards towards her home; then did she assume an expression of countenance and posture of body indicative of the most trustful confidence and confiding hope; — even as if it were thus she wished her house of clay to be translated

EVANGELICA

into stone. From forth her person darted a spark more brilliantly bright than the golden light of the sun ;—it was her soul that had burst its prison bars, and winged its flight gladly upwards to its God. Then was her soulless flesh rendered into marble ; then was her beating heart stilled into spotless stone ; then were the warm life-currents of her being frozen into icy coldness, and her flowing robes made immaculate as a seraph's wing. Her spirit had deserted its tenement ; her soul had fled upward to its home ; her structure remained, but so soulfully rendered into marble that Heaven's masterpiece proclaimed :—“ How infant is thy art, O man ! ” There stood this goddess of marble, mutely conveying to the heart of man in its soulful dialect of stone, that even as the sculptor sees an unseen angel dormant within the rough, uncouth

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

block of marble, and with hammer and chisel quickens it into being, and proudly steps it forth to view ; so does the celestial seed of a white-winged seraph, all unfostered, all uncared-for, lie dormant within us, which has need of the talismanic magic of an earnest will to quicken it into existence, and materialize its celestial germ into a Being who will gladly take us by the hand, and leading us out into the light will unfold our nature unto the reception of that wonderful truth called God.

With bowed heads and partly covered eyes — because of the glory of their Evangelist — did the beholders witness the passing out of her soul ; speechless, bewildered, they now gazed upon the marble substitute of her person ; but they hushed their hearts' sorrow, they stilled their souls' woe ; for they knew she had

EVANGELICA

passed out hand in hand with their God. No requiem was chanted for their be-reavement ; no dirge was intoned for their loss ; but grandly did a glorious Allelulia swell from their hearts, for He who had blushed Cana's waters into the ruddy glow of the crimson wine, had again un-heeded Nature's laws, and hearkening unto the yearning plea of their martyred love, had given earth's wanderers a perpetual memento of her triumphant life. Sacrilegious hands never moved the heavenly-made goddess from its site ; there it stood, winning votaries unnumbered to her evangel, who, accepting her dogma of man's being the creator of his destiny, the weaver of his Heaven, or the Beelzebub of his Hell, were incited thereby to throw the efforts of a madman into their spiritual realization, and thus stood their ground, and lost not their way in those

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

dark hours and grewsome passages which fall to all our lot. Her mother sorrowed not as one without a hope; neither did she convert her heart into a grave; but loyally threw her efforts into the work, and seeing it royally prosper was made content to wait.

Such was the life story of Evangelica;—Poverty, Vice, Debauchery had marked her for their own, and stamped the foul brand of their ownership upon her; at Heaven's command she flung them the gauntlet of Defiance; she smote them resisting blows, and even as fire is slain by the sun, forced them cry "Surrender" to the might of her weapon—Will; mentally, morally, physically she gave birth to herself anew; outwitted Fate; snapped her finger in the face of Destiny; won a birthright of honor amongst the regal giants of men; thawed high Heaven

EVANGELICA

into granting her whim, though it contradicted its laws ; and by the peace, joy, and rest she shed upon all around, brought this earth considerably nearer the atmosphere of Heaven. Power belongs to him who power exerts ; and nothing is surer than that the Styx of our stagnation, the leprosy of our decay, lies in simple non-resistance ; — let us draw a lesson from what Nature says.

From the generous branches of the maternal oak the acorns are let fall by the hundred ; perhaps but one of these will draw to itself genial sun, fertile soil, and productive moisture sufficient to warm it into life, to quicken it into being ; the rest, the oak forests that can never be, with the same unseen possibilities of life invisibly imbedded within them, sink into rot, and perish into decay. Even so with us unfortunate children of men ; too many

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

of us pass through life without one serious strife after the metal of which men are made from, and as weakly unresisting as those miserable calves we see huddled in carts on their way to the slaughter ; — thus is the celestial seed of the invisible seraph, with its unseen possibilities of life, left to perish ; thus does it remain unfostered ; thus is it blotted into decay.

Jean Paul Richter tells us that “ Whatever we wish to be, that we are ; for such is the force of the human will, joined to the Divine, that whatever we wish to be seriously, and with a true intention, that we become ; ” — and Jean Paul Richter tells us right ; we are neither the sport, nor the play-toy of any power either evil or good, but the sole moulders and creators of our individual Heaven or Hell. Nothing can more forcibly demonstrate this truth to our minds than dwelling on

EVANGELICA

the self-proven words ; — “ Sow an act, and you reap a habit ; sow a habit, and you reap a character ; sow a character, and you reap a destiny.” Habit is our second nature, our automaton self, and by assiduously making it our custom to do upon every occasion that which is best to be done, habit will eventually make it the most delightful. On our mortal side we are “composed of such stuff as dreams are made of ;” on our spiritual side we are destined Immortals ; therefore does it behoove us not to sell our birthright Esau-like for a mess of pottage, and barter momentary pleasureless pleasures for future repinings and regrets ; but to suckle well the germs of that unseen angel dormant within us until we are pregnant with its celestial thoughts and desires, and to make it the one end and aim of our life “to make as much out of

HEAVEN'S WORK OF ART

ourselves as could be made out of the stuff;" for "Not in the knowledge of things without, but in the perfection of the soul within, lies the empire of man aspiring to be more than men."



103259

